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A BOOK ABOUT DOMINIES:

BEING THE REFLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS OF A MEMBER OF THE PROFESSION.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

Pall Mall Gazette.

'The strong points of our author may be stated at once. He really knows what he is writing about—a mighty matter to begin with. He has taught boys, lived with them, and studied them; and can look at them, though a schoolmaster, with other than a schoolmaster's eyes. This, indeed, is the distinctive interest of what he has to say; for though everybody may hope that he knows his own boys, how can he be sure that he knows the boy genus? This writer submits them to examination as a genus, and says many shrewd things about them from that point of view. Another of his strong points is, that he holds a middle course between the old and new theories of education; and has the faculty of picking out what is good in each. And in a much more trying part of his duty he acquits himself well. He handles what he calls in the chapter he has devoted to them "The Difficulties and Vexations of the Dominie" with fairness and temper.'

Spectator.

'This is a manly, earnest book. The author describes in a series of essays the life and work of a schoolmaster; and as he has lived that life, and done that work from deliberate choice, his story is worth hearing. Why does the writer of a book so honest and thoughtful as this about dominies, come before the public anonymously? Let us hope that a second edition will ere long be called for, and that thus an opportunity may be afforded of correcting this mistake.'

Athenæum.

'The author is no Sabbatarian, and does not set a high value upon either sermons or social essays. Yet he writes on religious subjects with a genuine earnestness that reminds one of Dr. Arnold, whose vigorous manliness of character he seems to possess in no small degree.

'He is light-hearted and cheery, perhaps a little too fond of a sort of slangy phraseology, but can be grave and even pathetic at times, while he is often eloquent and never dull—altogether a very lively and agreeable talker. Our author gives a graphic account of how he became a dominie, the difficulties and vexations to which the dominie is subject, and the characters of some of his pupils both past and present. He has also an amusing chapter on other dominies, several varieties of whom he sketches with vivid force, both as they are represented in works of fiction and as he has found them in actual life. On a number of other subjects, more or less connected with his personal history and profession, he speaks in such a way as to excite interest and command respect.'

Imperial Review.

'This is a genial, well-written book, worth reading both by parents and boys; refreshing, too, from its good, old-fashioned spirit. If all teachers would form as high an ideal as he has formed, and would act upon it, the world would soon get better than it is. . . . Any how, he has written a book which, as we said, is sure to do the reader good, whether he is parent, schoolboy, or brother dominie.'

Daily News.

'The Dominie of this volume is by no means a repulsive schoolmaster. True, he professes faith in the birch, but, judging by his volume, he is kind-hearted in the main, and his mind is in his profession. It is impossible to rise from a perusal of the "Book about Dominies" without feeling that its author is a man of kindly nature, and that he is full of good humour, with just so much of sly satire as to make him a pleasant companion at the Christmas fireside.'

John Bull.

'A "Book about Dominies" is the work of no ordinary dominie who feels the dignity of his profession, and relates his experience, which is by no means to be despised. The book merits perusal by all interested in the great question of Education.'

Bell's Weekly Messenger.

'A more sensible book than this about boys has rarely been written, for it enters practically into all the particulars which have to be encountered amongst "the young ideas" who have to be trained for life, and are too often marred by the educational means adopted for

their early mental development. The writer is evidently one of the Arnold school—that "prince of schoolmasters"—who did more for the formation of the character of his pupils than any man that ever lived.'

London Society.

'This book contains an interesting fund of anecdote and professional sketches, full of sly sarcasm. The literary merit is uniformly of high order. There is a fine healthy feeling about the work, and a genuine pathos, which does not leave the reader all unmoved. It is a book which will repay perusal, and is especially to be commended to schoolboys and schoolmasters.'

Morning Star.

'"A Book about Dominies" is an extremely clever and amusing series of sketches *by one who describes himself as of the profession.* . . . In a modest Preface he expresses a belief that such a book may be made as amusing as many novels in Mr. Mudie's library. The "Book about Dominies" is a hundred times more amusing and interesting than nine out of ten of such novels.'

Court Journal.

'Every page of the author's writing shows how thoroughly he appreciates the true aim of a schoolmaster's life, how impressed he is with his high and responsible duties, and how admirably qualified he is to fulfil them. Both boys and masters will be the better for a perusal of this thoughtful, kindly, and sensible book.'

City Press.

'This is a book which we strongly recommend to those who are anxious about the education of their boys. It is a capital book for any one to read. The style is, in general, sprightly, and the views of the writer, though perhaps too "broad" to suit certain "schools" of thinkers and believers, is well adapted to a mixed multitude of parents and guardians. We regard "A Book about Dominies" as pre-eminently a book of the season; it is a book in which parents and guardians of boys will find many suggestive hints.'

London Scotsman.

'This series of gossipy, outspoken, quaint essays on a variety of subjects, more or less connected with the profession of schoolmaster, is written by one who plainly is a dominie *con amore*, who realizes to the fullest extent the responsibilities incumbent on, and a certain pleasure appertaining to the conscientious trainer of youth. The Dominie, in his quiet, keenly-sympathetic, yet humbug-hating way, has studied the character of boys with great geniality and discretion.'

Illustrated London News.

'The writer of this little book needed not to make any apology, for he has written what is more than pleasant to read. "Unconnected and egotistical" his "Essays" may be; but there is a style which makes even the egotistical readable, and he has command of that style. Moreover, his gossip is not only far from dull, but it also puts plain truths simply before one, and it occasionally becomes irresistibly humorous and irresistibly pathetic."

Examiner.

'This is a series of pleasant Essays on the relations between a schoolmaster and his boys, by a clever man with a touch of humour in his composition and thorough good-feeling, though he is old-fashioned enough to abide by faith in the cane. But he is also new-fashioned enough to publish in Scotland the fact that he thinks an occasional Sunday walk into the country as religious as church-going. "Yes," he says, "orthodox reader, it is as well to come out with it and have done!"'

Daily Review.

'Not since Henry Taylor wrote his essay on children have we seen anything on the important subject of this work so sensibly conceived or uttered so gracefully. It ought to find its way at once to the hands of every pupil-teacher in the country; but the oldest member of the profession will be a man of no ordinary accomplishment and experience if he does not here find something to encourage, to incite, to instruct, and to console him.'

The Contemporary Review.

'Our Dominie is always lively and instructive, throwing out most valuable practical hints, in the lightest manner. Nor is he without an exquisite touch of pathos, which here and there verge on the poetic.'

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SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

A BOOK ABOUT BOYS.

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By A. R. HOPE,
AUTHOR OF 'A BOOK ABOUT DOMINIES.'

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PREFACE.

'A SHORT and certain way to obtain the character of a reasonable and wise man,' says Swift, 'is, whenever any one tells you his opinion, to comply with it.' I fear that if judged by this rule I may seem to have taken a very roundabout way to gain credit among my contemporaries, for my opinions on many subjects are at issue with those of most people, and I take no pains to conceal the fact. In particular, I have formed an unusual estimate of the nature and value of Boys, the exposition of which is the subject of these pages.

I have paid more attention to the advice of the above-mentioned author where he says, 'Positiveness is a good quality for preachers and orators, because he that would obtrude his thoughts and reasons upon a multitude will convince others the more as he appears convinced himself.' Accordingly, in my Book about Dominies and in the present Book about Boys, I have been positive and egotistical to a degree

which I had expected to produce more hostile criticism than has been the result. My critics have certainly been kinder to me than I hoped; and more than one of my friends who have taken the trouble to read to me extracts from my own work, and to entertain me with guesses as to its authorship, has pronounced my efforts to be neither unpleasing nor uninstructive. Under these circumstances, what could restrain me from again presenting myself as a candidate for public favour? Nor am I deterred by hearing that a three-volumed novel, in its second edition, has been seen to turn up its title-page with scorn when placed beside my humble production, and that a ponderous folio, 'On the Wisdom of our Great-Grandmothers' is known to have expressed itself very decidedly as to the absurdity of my pretensions.

Another possible criticism I must relieve of its sting by meeting it half-way. Ignorant and envious people may possibly attempt to disparage my character for elegance and precision by asserting that I have repeated myself more than once, have said much the same thing in different places, with the view of distending my pages. I repudiate the insinuation with scorn. The fact is, my experience as a teacher has taught me that what is necessary to convince the

mass of mankind of the truth of any particular doctrine is to keep constantly repeating the enunciation of it till it become familiar, and therefore commends itself to their minds. If Mr. Carlyle had only once told the people of England that they were fools and flunkeys, who would pay any attention to him? So it is to be counted a merit, and not a fault, if in these pages it be found stated more than once *that boys are not so worthless as some people suppose them*, or *that some people are not so wise and virtuous as they think themselves.*

I do not know whether I am most pleased or disgusted to find that some of the things which I have said in this volume have been said with very little variety in a new book which has just come into my hands—Professor D'Arcy Thompson's 'Wayside Thoughts.' There is a remarkable coincidence both of thought and expression between some passages in his book and mine; and, to show that this is no more than a coincidence, I may mention that my MS. was in the publisher's hands before the appearance of 'Wayside Thoughts.' Two are said to be better than one, and I would fain hope that this practical similarity may be an augury that both his 'Wayside Thoughts' and mine may be destined to obtain some

deepness of earth, and to survive the attacks of the birds of the air. I cannot, indeed, pretend to be such a high mountain as Professor Thompson, but certain beams of light would seem to have dawned upon our summits at the same time. Still it would, of course, have been more gratifying to one's vanity to have had a small private sunrise all to one's-self.

Talking about vanity, I would draw attention to the fact that I have been too proud to imitate the example of most authorlings of the day by employing the form of fiction to gild the pill which I wish the public to swallow. Yet I have been tempted. One night, as I was meditating over my bold design of appearing for the second time in print, a certain Muse, who is a friend of mine, appeared to me, and addressed me in a foreign language :—

> 'Si tantus amor menti, si tanta cupido,
> Bis Stygios innare lacus, bis nigra videre
> Tartara,[1] et insano juvat indulgere labori,
> Accipe, quæ peragenda prius.'

With these words she laid on my table a small packet and a pile of books, mostly in three volumes, which I recognised as being the most widely-circu-

[1] *Tartara.* This word is supposed to have signified *unfavourable opinions of the press.*

lated publications of the day. The packet was labelled 'Ingredients for the Manufacture of Literary Fame,' and its contents were as follows:—

One complete plot, newest style, with murder, forgery, bigamy, etc.
Two broken hearts.
Three quotations from Shakespeare.
Sixteen curious coincidences to help on the plot.
One chapter of lovers' vows. Moonlight effects.
Several suppressed exclamations and a quantity of despair for suspicious rival in the background.
One ball, with fashionable conversation to fill up third volume.
One captain of dragoons, with whiskers, muscles, oaths, etc.
One heroine, best quality.
One curate.
Theological views for ditto.
Complete set of ten minor characters, favourite patterns.
One moral reflection for last chapter.
A few principles of grammar and composition. (*N.B.*—To be used with caution.)
Directions for use.—Mix well together, and adulterate with slang and bombast, which may be obtained in any quantity from the works of A——, B——, C——, D——, etc.

The friendly Muse had disappeared, so I thought it no act of discourtesy to drop the packet quietly into the fire. Then I opened the window and flung out the books, which were already beginning to make their soporific effect felt throughout the room; and I made up my mind not to put forth my views in a novel, but in a sound, solid, grave series of essays,

which, however boldly disregarding the favour of the giddy and fickle multitude, should appeal to the cultivated minds of the learned, the profound, the refined. Nevertheless, the vulgar must be constrained to accept the truth of my doctrines, seeing that I could have written a novel in proof of them if I had pleased.

CHAPTER I.

THE SUBJECT INTRODUCED AND DEFINED.

'*Story*, God bless you! I have none to tell, sir.'—CANNING.

IN these days of railways, telegraphs, and the penny post, it is useless to talk of the dignity of literature and authorship. I know myself that I would rather have a chat with a friend than a lecture from ever so learned and stupid a man. So in these pages I beg to state that I intend to throw off the restraint which generally exists between an author and his audience. From the first I shall take my reader into confidence, by telling him how, why, and when this book came to be written.

Having sent forth my analytical account of the nature and properties of the Dominie, and having seen it received with such a degree of favour and encouragement as to give me hope that further lucubrations on my part might not prove unacceptable, I

began to look abroad for some cargo of sufficient importance and interest to warrant me in again venturing upon the sea of publication.

I had not far to search: it all at once struck me that the British public had no work about Boys.

We have books upon mathematics, hydrostatics, dynamics, and metaphysics; books upon theology philology, and meteorology; books upon history, biography, and geography; books about fact that are full of fiction, and books of fiction that are sad facts; books inculcating the observance, and books illustrating the breach, of all the Commandments; books about gorillas, elephants, and emperors of Abyssinia; books about men, women, girls, and babies; but not, so far as I know, a single book about boys.

Plenty of essays, tracts, pamphlets, stories, poems, remarks, theories, strictures, sneers, and so forth, on this important subject, but not one learned, authentic, entire volume, solely and simply treating of boys.

So, without more ado, I exclaimed '*Eureka!*' ordered a ream of paper and a goose (the bird of Minerva in my day, before Mr. Gillott came into competition), and set to work. The goose has long since been buried in the shadows of the past (the exact date of its disappearance from this world of woe was the 25th of December), but its feathers remain; and by their help I hope these pages may wing their way to the furthest regions of futurity. Not to lose the

élan of this bold and striking metaphor, I think I had better plunge at once into my subject, though I must give you to understand that I am just as able as other accomplished authors to keep you standing here for half an hour, talking about anything whatever, or nothing at all, by way of introduction.

At the very outset of this important work, I feel it strongly incumbent upon me to indicate from what point of view I intend to consider the subject. I shall therefore proceed, after the fashion of other writers about boys, to express my belief in one particular kind of boy, whom I hold to be more admirable and amiable than all the rest of the species. Juvenile authors—though by the way I am not what is generally called a juvenile author, writing, as I do, for the instruction and benefit of the senior portion of the community—have all their favourite type of boy. One loves a muscular boy, and gives forth a very uncertain sound as to whether he considers cricket or Christianity the loftier virtue. Another doats on intelligence, and gives us to understand that a boy who likes to pick up shells and plants, and to know their names, is incapable of a mean action. And a third—a lady, most likely—goes into ecstasies at the sight of a boy who pulls off his cap gracefully, and is quite satisfied that this virtue will before long be instrumental in raising him to the judicial or episcopal bench. Then one likes a curly-haired boy,

and another a blue-eyed boy, while another places more faith in red cheeks. Some, again, delight in boys in white surplices, or in knickerbockers, or perhaps can see no beauty in youth unless in a smock-frock.

Now, I cannot say that I entertain a special regard for any one of these specific varieties of boys. My heart goes with all boys, but especially with a thoroughly *boyish* boy. I don't think much of your gentlemanly, neat boys, and I abominate your pretty, effeminate boys, and I have not so much faith as some people in even your good, clever boys, who are always at the head of their classes, and never do anything naughty, except when it is not found out. But I like the happy, healthy, unsophisticated boy, who is a boy, and not a young gentleman; active, restless, generous, brave, truthful, simple, and pure-minded, who thinks it half a pleasure to bear pain without crying, climbs trees, tears his trousers, has frequent tumbles, bumps, and bruises, and comes home now and then splashed over with mud. But I must take care what I am saying, for, between you and me, reader, I dare not confess all the qualities which are essential and non-essential to my idea of boyhood, lest prudent mammas and aunts, who can't see the difference between boys and girls, should proclaim me a heretic, and ban me from the domestic library.

In this sense, then, with some latitude, will I use

the word boy in the following pages. Yet, upon second thoughts, it may be as well to caution the reader, *seriatim*, concerning certain young animals of the male sex, who, having the outward appearance and similitude of boys, are, nevertheless, not exactly boys, and will not be included in any general proposition which I may lay down as affecting the species.

1. *Young Gentlemen.*—I shudder as I pen the disgusting name. You know what I mean? the beardless beings who wish to be thought men and dandies, and to that end smoke and swear and swagger, with more or less impunity. If you go out into the streets on a Saturday afternoon, you will see hundreds of them, whom you would like to take between your finger and thumb, and drop quietly into the gutter.

2. *Mammas' Darlings.*—A large and increasing class, I grieve to say, though I would speak tenderly of them, believing that their degradation is often caused by circumstances over which neither they, nor the wisest of writers and teachers, have any control, viz., fond and foolish mothers, who will make them wear comforters and goloshes, and keep them in the house when it is cold, and encourage them to cry when they are hurt.

3. *Clever Boys.*—I mean preternaturally clever boys, who read Sir Walter Scott at the tender age of five, but having thereafter been introduced to Greek, look

with scorn and contempt on all subjects of lighter interest, and never condescend to open another story-book, but spend their boyhood and youth in steadily and perseveringly drying themselves up into Latin and Greek mummies, and, if haply they escape premature death, end by becoming sound and venerable and not too brilliant bishops, or stupid and useless schoolmasters, or writers of soul-appalling commentaries.

4. *Good Boys.*—I mean very good boys, who always try to please their masters, and never are noisy or idle, and would sink into the ground with shame if it were found necessary to punish them, and whose conversation, in story-books, is of the most moral and grammatical description. Of course there are such boys, because the story-books say so, but it has never been my good fortune to meet with them.

These four classes, then, I am compelled entirely to exclude from the honours and privileges of boyhood. And yet my heart yearns towards them, for, after all, are they not in some respects boys and brothers?

Having thus defined my subject, it may seem necessary for me to make some apology for my choice of it. The study of boys, though a very important and useful one, is held in but little estimation. I can fancy the public turning up its sagacious nose and exclaiming, 'Ridiculous! If this person wishes

to try to amuse or instruct us, we are ready to give him a hearing; but really he cannot expect us to be interested in ordinary humdrum schoolboys.' 'Write a book about boys!' says papa. 'Nonsense! Give them plenty of beef and pudding and Latin grammar, and a good thrashing now and then, and don't bother yourself further about them.' 'They ought to have good, thick stockings, and wear flannels in winter,' opines mamma; 'but one doesn't need a book to tell one that.' 'Boys are such stupid and noisy creatures!' declares Miss in her teens, 'a book about them must be very slow. Couldn't we send it back to the library, and get the first volume of "The Benighted Bigamist"?'

I am sincerely sorry for any one whose mind is in such a sad state of indifference. I believe in boys myself, and I wish to write about boys, to the end that other people may believe in them also, and that thus I may do a signal service to my generation. For if people were to know more and to sympathize more with the thoughts and the feelings and the habits of boys, I am persuaded that a great benefit would accrue both to the boys and to their elders.

This very morning one of my boys did something that he ought not to have done, and it was my sorrowful duty to send out the *fiat* concerning him, UT VERBERANDUS ESSET. He knew that he had done wrong, and that I was doing right, and he was not sullen

nor snivelling, but made up his mind to endure as bravely as might be, what in his little world is the great evil of life. And then he came to me modestly, trustfully, to tell me that it was all over, and that he had not cried, and that he was sorry. And I knew that he was speaking from his heart; and we settled that we would not do it again. And he was grateful that I forgave him so soon, and did not continue to reproach him with what was at worst a very venial fault, though a grave infringement of scholastic discipline. Then he dismissed the matter from his mind, and ran out to play. But I shall not forget it so soon, for I felt that if I had all the kingdoms of the earth, I would have given them to be as simple-minded as that boy, as frank, as honest, as ready to forget pain and sorrow. And suddenly I remembered that I had wronged that very boy, and had not been so frank in confessing my fault. A day or two before, I had made him lose his place in the class by mistake, and on discovering my error, had been ashamed to set it right, lest my boys should suspect that I was at any time inattentive and forgetful. And now I felt deeply how mean my conduct seemed beside his.

I am afraid some schoolmasters will think that I took a step ruinous to the discipline of my class. For when my boys came back from their play, I told them what a wrong and cowardly thing I had done.

I told them that I was ashamed and sorry, and earnestly hoped both that I would never commit such a fault again, and that none of them would follow my example. I told them that I was no better than they, only perhaps a little wiser; and that, man or boy, each of us was daily tempted to be dishonest and a coward, and must wrestle with and conquer temptation, if he would be good and happy. My boys for the moment looked rather astonished at this confession, but I never found that it diminished their respect for me.

Thus I, who write essays in praise of virtue and truth and kindness, was put to shame by an ordinary, thoughtless schoolboy, whose theological views are so indefinite that they have never been put into words, and who is scolded and punished every second day of his life. And thus might we all be put often to shame, if we knew our boys better, and our own hearts.

So, is it not worth while to live and to work among boys? And is it useless and uninteresting to write about them—to write something which may tend to show that they are not merely restless, noisy, troublesome shreds of humanity, who some day, by dint of fear or fondling, may come to be worthy of our consideration, but in the meantime must be kept out of sight and mind as much as possible?

Lastly, it may seem necessary for me to set forth

my qualifications for the task of writing about boys. I have been the companion of boys all my life; I have taught them ever since I became a man. All along I have looked upon them not as receptacles for Latin grammar and copy-book precepts, but as young and blessed human beings, with minds to be nurtured, hearts to be won, souls to be saved. I have tried to understand their thoughts, to enter into their feelings, to sympathize with their joys and sorrows. Thus I may say with truth that I have learned more among boys than I have taught. So, speaking in the character, and from the point of view of a schoolmaster, I gird up my loins to write a book about boys, which may not only amuse, but also instruct and improve the lay and ignorant portions of the community.

CHAPTER II.

THE AMUSEMENTS OF BOYS.

'I think recreation to them as necessary as their food, and that nothing can be recreation which does not delight.'—LOCKE.

BOYS must have amusement. That is a doctrine which all truly wise educators have long ago given in to, and which the instinct of the vulgar has embodied in a well-known apophthegm about all work and no play. You cannot make a boy keep quiet and look sober for more than a limited number of hours at a time; you cannot persuade him that purely intellectual pleasures are all that he requires. Healthy nature teaches otherwise, and if you drive her out with a fork, take heed that she return not with a vengeance, bringing with her something worse than rebellion against your repressive theories.

My aunt Deborah has tried the experiment. The good lady had one son, Johnny by name and Jack by nature, as restless, frolicsome, jovial a boy as ever

threw a snowball or turned a somersault. But my aunt Deborah had a pious horror of all such frivolities, and early in his life she dedicated him to the service of Mrs. Grundy, resolving so to bring him up that his gentle and refined nature might abhor the rough pranks of common boys. *Haud mora.* From his cradle he was reared as became the future exemplar of boyhood,—the delight of tea-parties. A staid and sober nurse, and in time a French governess—a walking hand-book of etiquette,—were intrusted with the duty of guiding his infant steps in the paths of propriety. Nor alone were his morals and manners vigilantly attended to. He was crammed with useful knowledge of every description, which he showed great aptitude for acquiring and for forgetting immediately. In due time he was sent to school, but even there my aunt's care did not desert him. He was never allowed to start till the exact moment, so that he might have no time to crumple his collar or fatigue himself by running about before beginning his lessons, and, for the same reason, he was required to return home immediately after the close of the school. Daily and hourly was he admonished not to associate with the other boys, nor to learn their vulgar habits. The schoolmaster was desired to have an eye upon him, and to rebuke him severely if he laughed or fidgeted or did any other wicked thing. But, in spite of all these precautions,

Aunt Deborah was horrified to find that he did not escape pollution. He would rush into her immaculate drawing-room hot and panting, having forgotten to wipe his boots or to shut the door. His trouser-pockets were sticky with unctuous and saccharine compounds, traces of which sometimes appeared round his mouth. He tore his jacket; he whistled in the lobby; he danced Jim Crow round the governess, and in answer to her fervent expostulations against the vulgarity of this performance, he unblushingly called her a 'mawk.' All this vexed my aunt Deborah's soul, and the cup of her indignation boiled over when he returned one day with a fine fresh black eye and a story about how he had called young Squills, the chemist's son, 'Bottles,' and how Squills had straightway smote him on the nose, and how he, Johnny, wasn't going to stand it, and how finally a bloody battle was fought, in which Master Johnny represented himself as defeating the enemy with great slaughter, though I have reason to believe that a very different account of the fray was given by Tommy Squills to his plebeian relatives.

My aunt's front almost stood on end with horror. 'That dreadful school' was no longer a place for her darling, and he was instantly removed from the risk of temptation to engage in battle with young chemists and druggists and such low people. A tutor was engaged for him,—none of your flighty

young men who will condescend to romp with their pupils out of schoolroom hours, but a sober sage, after the model of the period of 'Evenings at Home' and 'Sandford and Merton,' who never took the poor boy out to walk without asking him 'What are paving-stones made of?' or, 'When were door-steps introduced into England?' and used to make a half-holiday an excuse for a complete course of botany, astronomy, and mineralogy. Johnny was never allowed out of his sight or his aunt's, and by both of them all restlessness, noisiness, and boyish thoughtlessness were stigmatized as 'ungentlemanly,' 'disgraceful,' and so forth, till he dared not amuse himself in any boyish way in their presence, and was driven to indulge his natural propensities on the sly. The result of this system of government was that the boy finally kicked loose, half-broke his mother's heart by his disobedience, and then nearly finished that operation by running away to sea,—a deplorable course of conduct, which she unhesitatingly ascribes 'to the harm he got at that school.' Some day, let us hope, he will come home a sadder and a wiser man; in the meantime he is leading a most unsatisfactory and disrespectable life.

This sort of thing is not so much to be wondered at in an old lady like my aunt, who is a worthy though stupid woman, but it is a fact that there are, and always have been, not only mothers, but fathers,

who thought it right to try to educate their children in the teeth of nature. Juvenal hits off the case very neatly when he mentions some unlucky boys—

'Quidam, sortiti metuentem sabbata patrem.'

That is, some boys have Calvinistic parents who will teach them that it is a sin, or almost a sin, to laugh and jump and tumble and run, and thus do much to make them first miserable, then wicked. Understand me—I don't join in the parrot cry of certain moralists against so-called religious people, I speak merely of what I believe to be the exceptional case. I have seen no such merry and happy children as in the most pious families of my acquaintance; but there is a class of saturnine Christians who hold the views I refer to, and whose children proverbially grow up worthless in too many cases. Is it any wonder? Let such examples as that of my aunt Deborah's son be a lesson to us how we dare to fight against nature.

As boys must be amused, it is a benevolent provision which has decreed that it shall take so little to amuse them. All that a boy needs is room to play in and companions to play with, and he is happy as a king. I always pity a boy without a companion, or a boy in London, where there is so little room for playing, and yet I have no doubt that even under these circumstances boys manage to enjoy themselves.

But doubtless boyhood is in its glory in the country. The rural juvenile has an ever-changing round of congenial pleasures, which leave nought to be desired in his lot. First, in winter there is the ice, the broad rivers, the muddy ponds, the wide fens converted by the magic of King Frost into a playground, over which we go skimming for miles as if on fairies' wings, spurning the base realities of solid earth, forgetful of all things but the keen air and the sparkling frost and the exhilarating motion. What in life could seem more Elysian to a boy? But the clouds gather, the snow falls thickly on the ground; old ladies lament, but the boy rejoices. Lavish nature has sent him a new pleasure—to dabble in the pure snow till he glows with heat, to build the snow man, higher, higher, and dance round him, oblivious of wet feet, scornful of goloshes. A snowball fight, mad charge, swift retreat—what sport so full of mingled excitement and good-humour! Perhaps we have talent enough to construct a sledge, and go spinning down the hillside at breathless speed, generally overturning at the end of our journey, which is half the fun. Perhaps we have hare-and-hounds over the snow, tracing the hare by his footsteps, and making the white woods ring with our shouts. At all events, we don't stay by the fire in this glorious weather, I promise you.

By and by come spring and summer, and the boy

tribe still is cared for by nature. We are off to the woods, we are the first to hail the primrose and the gentle violet, we climb the trees, bursting forth into bloom, in search of birds' nests. The year 'grows hot, and in cool rivers, under shady willows, or in deep black pools, or perhaps on far-stretching yellow sands, we lave our white and pliant limbs, splashing, shouting, and singing as joyfully and fearlessly as if Adam were still in his garden, sinless and sorrowless. Then we mount the pony, and scamper through the leafy lanes, or we roll in the pleasant hay, or we gather daisy-chains, and pelt each other with buttercups. By and by, when autumn has begun with a fair show of kindness to do its ruthless work, we sally forth,

> 'Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds,
> Which for that service had been husbanded,
> Motley accoutrement of power, to smile
> At thorns and brakes and brambles.'

Basket in hand, we are off to gather nuts and blackberries. And we dance among the fallen leaves, merrily thoughtless of the sober lesson they would teach us; and we pile them and the fir-cones and the crackling twigs into bonfires, and rejoice in the blaze and the cloud of smoke, and glory in having burned our fingers and made light of the pain, and mayhap, if the cook be gracious, we roast potatoes in the embers, and imagine ourselves young Robinson

Crusoes. Thus pleasure is added to pleasure, till a hard frost some night late in October reminds us that it is time to begin the round again. And at all times we have room to run and jump and tumble and howl to our hearts' content, without fear of breaking anything or frightening anybody, unless haply an aged donkey browsing in the next field. Is not the country boy's lot cast in pleasant places?

But he may not always eat the milk and honey of the earth. Ere many Christmases have rolled over his careless head, it behoves that he be sent to school, and at first his young soul is appalled by the army of rods, books, and teachers, which he now beholds arrayed against his peace of mind. But he soon plucks up heart, and finds that even under these circumstances, boys can conspire to be happy, and have a very fair chance of succeeding.

It is very interesting to watch the various ways which schoolboys have of amusing themselves, and to judge thereby of their different dispositions. At a boarding-school where I was once a master, I used to stay in the schoolroom after lesson hours and amuse myself in this way. A few of the boys would take up story-books; a smaller number might voluntarily go on looking over their lessons for a short time. Several would make a rush to the fire, and begin to cook sausages or slices of bacon. One melancholy youth used to produce a flute, and emit

therefrom doleful strains which nobody ever paid any attention to. But the real boys, as soon as the moment of freedom arrived, would begin to revel in their boyhood by jumping, wrestling, chasing each other round tables, scrambling, rolling on the floor, and otherwise behaving in a way calculated to terrify prudent mothers and sisters, the whole performance being accompanied by a mingled din of shouting, laughing, whistling, chattering, and pure howling for howling's sake, which I confess was music to my ears. And looking on such scenes from a quiet corner, I used to long for a fairy to touch me with her wand, that I, too, might become small and lithe and smooth-faced and light-hearted, and might roll and tumble, and hurt and get hurt, and shout out for very carelessness and fulness of life.

Many schoolmasters would severely blame me for this foolish feeling. They have no sympathy with such riotous fun. At best they consider it trivial, and try to frown it down in their presence. But I thank Heaven for granting me a kindly interest in these rough gambols, and for teaching me that to make boys happy it is only necessary to leave them alone. Next to preventing boys from amusing themselves at all, there is no greater mistake than to try to make them amuse themselves in our way. I would call attention to one example of the mischief which older people can do by meddling in the sports of boys.

Once upon a time, doubtless, boys played cricket in a thoroughly boyish and unsophisticated way, but with quite as much fun and enjoyment as any 'crack' eleven of the present day. But we must take it under our patronage forsooth; we must instruct our boys to play it on 'scientific' principles. The result is that cricket is gradually becoming an occupation rather than an amusement in our schools, and furthermore an excuse for idleness, expense, and puppyism. No school of any pretensions can play without its 'professional,' its 'turf,' and its uniform of gorgeous flannel raiment, for which Paterfamilias has to pay, grumbling much at the extravagance of the present day, and yet loath that his son should be the champion of frugality, which under an uglier name is the bugbear of John Bull. And when as much money and more time has been spent upon this pursuit than upon the supposed legitimate business of schools, can we allow such paltry considerations as Latin and Greek to stand in the way of our muscular Christianity practices? Certainly not, so we must have half holidays and whole holidays, and studies must be shoved on one side in the cricket season, and half a form must every now and then be taken away from school to play a match in the next county. Cricket is a very good thing in its way, and Tom Brown was a good sort of fellow in his way; but this muscular *furore* is being overdone, and running to seed. Tom

and his friends are getting bumptious from the respect that is paid to them, and for every inch given them, they seem inclined to take an ell. Many of us dominies don't approve of this sort of thing, but we have not courage to resist it. Yet the most thoughtful of us are beginning to be afraid of the Frankenstein which we have raised up, and to ask ourselves, whether in twenty years we or our 'professionals' will have most power in our schools.

A still worse practice with regard to cricket is, forcing boys to play at it whether they will or no, which some dominies ordain, or at least wink at. I may seem to speak an abominable heresy in the opinion of the advocates of that grand public school system whose ruling principle is, 'Every one for himself, and the weakest goes to the wall,' but I say that it is a shame to force boys to spend their holiday-time in playing at a game which they do not care for, and in which, most likely, they are only allowed to take a subordinate share. It is comprehensible enough how big boys, who are apt to become tyrants when left to themselves, should try to bring about this state of things, but I wonder that some schoolmasters should not have more sense than to suppose it just and kind.

I like to see boys playing at purely boyish games, in a boyish way, with companions of their own age, and with a spirit showing that they play voluntarily,

and not as a task. But I like to see these games kept within their proper bounds, and not allowed to encroach upon matters of more importance. It is not a good lesson to teach that the business of life is to play, a lesson which too many boys learn at school and carry into practice with a vengeance when they grow older. And, above all, it is an abomination to me to see simple and manly sports turned into an excuse for expense and foppishness. Oh! let us have one green oasis in the desert of luxury and pride, one blessed spot where money and tailorism are as dross and dust, and courage, activity, and kindliness are all in all.

It is a sad fact, illustrative of the depravity of human nature, that many of our amusements derive their zest from our love of destruction. Boys are no better than their elders in this respect. They delight to follow the sportive trade of ruin and annihilation, with all its attendant pomp and circumstance. To hunt and to shoot are the aims of ambitious boyhood. Luckily, however, for their own safety and the peace of mind of those who have to do with them, horses and guns are not attainable except by an inconsiderable minority of the boy tribe, and the majority have to content themselves with catapults, pea-shooters, and the bloodless chase of two-legged Reynards upon 'Shanks, his mare.' But the possession of a rod and line is within the reach of most

boys, or, at the worst, a stick, string, and crooked pin will serve their need. Hence you shall see your boy learned in the habits of the fishy tribe, eloquent on the subject of grubs and flies, profound in his criticism of gut and knots, and much better versed in the geography of dark pools and rippling shallows than in the divisions of Gallia, or the mountains of Arcadia. I have not the heart to forbid him; but, for my part, I must say I don't care to see a boy spend much of time in fishing. I don't want to say anything which may cause the ghost of Izaak Walton a moment's uneasiness, and I am far from homologating the dictum of a great man which describes angling as 'a stick with a fool at one end, and a worm at the other;' but I consider it at best but a selfish, solitary pursuit, foreign to the social nature of the real boy, and always look upon a juvenile angler as tempted by the mere animal and lazy pleasure of it, without the excuse of philosophic meditation, the opportunity for which may be pleaded in defence of older brethren of the craft. I ought not to speak so unsympathizingly, for I am an angler myself; but with me angling is only an excuse for necessary rest and vacancy of mind, and I may say in extenuation of my attempts of this kind, that they are seldom crowned by success in the way of destruction, and that any fish foolish enough to allow itself to be caught by me, is without doubt deserving of its fate.

Boys, like their elders, are fond of fighting, and they fight much oftener, because to them the expense is much less, and the consequences of warfare not nearly so disastrous. Hence arise wrestlings and pugilistic encounters, and hence much wailing from afflicted mammas and immaculate dominies of the reverend sort, who see in black eyes and swollen lips the visible handiwork of him who proverbially finds mischief and worse than mischief in which to employ idle hands; but I confess that I do not share this feeling, and am willing to grant fighting its place as an amusement, for to boys it is generally little more than an amusement, being practised in most cases without cause and without ill-feeling. A thing happened in my class the other day which tickled me very much. A new alumnus made his appearance, full of hope and eagerness to enter upon his boyish birthright. Said alumnus confessing to Pagan ignorance of the Greek alphabet, I placed him under the temporary tuition of another boy, who, I thought, would instruct him in that mystery, and might possibly endeavour to be his Mentor in other things which a new boy has to learn. I was rather pleased to see the diligence with which the second boy seemed to apply himself to the task, and rather surprised to find that no great result in the way of imparted knowledge was the fruit of their whispered conversation. What was my surprise to learn from

one of them, some time afterwards, when he thought it might be safe to tell me, that they had taken that singular opportunity of arranging to have a fight after school, which duly came off, with what result it importeth not the reader to know.

There was nothing very wrong in all this, except disrespect to the Greek alphabet. After a cursory look at that instructive but not entertaining subject of interest, the nature of these two boys, utter strangers to each other, had impelled them to sympathetic discourse on matters familiar to both. They soon discovered that each was ready to run the risk of blood and bruises for the sake of excitement and glory, of pain and danger. They accordingly agreed to give each other a mutual opportunity for gratifying this instinct, and entered into the contest, I will be bound to say, without the slightest bad feeling on either side, and brought it to an end when both parties had had enough, without any very deplorable results.

Such, I daresay, are the majority of schoolboy fights—mere trials of skill, endurance, and good-humour, which I for one look on not unkindly; but there are fights fought among boys in another spirit, when the eye sparkles and the cheeks flush with anger, and the fresh young hearts are changed to gall by the spirit of Cain. This is wrong, doubtless, and to be grieved for; but who are we, that would scorn

boyhood for such wrong-doing? Do we grown-up people never hate and slander? Are we strangers to the passions which inspire the hot word and the ready blow? And are we purer if we nurse them in our hearts silently, letting them grow and fester? No! The bravest man or boy is he who wrestles with the devil of rage in his heart, and by God's help conquers and casts it forth; but if we are to be angry, better a boy's open and sudden wrath than a man's long-enduring malice, cloaked over by conventionality and self-concealment that is not self-command. No, good respectable people, we must take heed how we blame the quarrels of boys.

> 'Put down the passions that make earth hell!
> Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
> Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind
> The bitter springs of anger and fear;
> Down, too, down at your own fireside
> With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
> For each is at war with mankind;'—

then may we frown on the young passionate natures, whose angry thought begets instant word and deed, and passes away the sooner, like a summer cloud. I have no hesitation in saying that among boys those quarrels are the shortest and the least bitter which draw to a head at once, and are honestly fought out, and thereafter readily forgotten.

But perhaps the constructive and inventive faculties play as great a part as any in the amusements of

boys. Before he is well able to crawl, the infant delights to erect gorgeous and fantastic structures through the agency of a box of bricks. And the schoolboy takes equal pleasure in cutting out a boat or modelling a steam-engine, or making gas in a tobacco-pipe, nay, in exceeding wet seasons, towards the close of the holidays, he has been known to take lessons from his sister's governess in the knitting of Berlin wool or the stringing of beads, and to produce mats and kettle-holders of fearful and wonderful patterns. A chemical chest is also exceedingly congenial to the juvenile mind, especially if it contains plenty of materials for producing smoke and smell. I remember one of my boys who was a perfect miracle of science and art of all descriptions, and who discovered a new motive principle that he expected entirely to supersede steam, and render all the railroads in the country unnecessary. He treated me once to a private exhibition of the machine by which his discovery was illustrated. I don't exactly remember what the principle of it was, and I cannot say that the results of it have had any perceptible influence on the course of civilisation,—but it was very wonderful.

Other amusements of boys depend chiefly upon acquisitiveness for their zest. I refer to the collecting manias which we see so much of now-a-days. In my time, birds' eggs, so far as I recollect, were the only legitimate objects of collection, and I am not sure

that it is a good sign of the present age that the objects of which boys make collections are those which demand far less exertion and risk on their part to secure them, and at the same time bring into play far more the sordid and sophisticated parts of human nature. Seals, stamps, coins, and crests, are the rage in modern days, and the acquisition of them often gives rise to an amount of higgling and trafficking which one doesn't like to see in boys. Take up any boy's magazine, and you will read dozens of advertisements issued by juvenile merchants who profess to *sell* stamps. This is disgusting, but it is almost as bad to see young collectors running about the playground eagerly offering to exchange Portugals for Bavarias, Russians for Hong-kongs. However, it is some satisfaction to think that this particular mania is dying out of our best schools, and that the others are, for various reasons, not so liable to abuse. *Philately*, as it is called, has had its day, and, so far as I can see, the collection of crests and monograms is the prevalent mania at present. As for birds' eggs, few boys seem ever to think of them now, though I should be glad to hear that I am wrong. Bird-nesting is an amusement which may be carried on in a very cruel way, and which sometimes leads to mischief and to serious scrapes, yet it is a better sign of healthy boyhood than a mania for purchasing and exchanging postage-stamps.

The mention of bird-nesting reminds me that I must confess frankly that boys have two great faults, which become very evident in their amusements. The first of these is a want of sensibility for the feelings of others. This is partly the result of selfishness, partly of that part of boy-nature which leads him to delight in hurting and being hurt, in chaffing and giving chaff. So, when a boy throws a stone at a jackass, or makes open and irreverent comment upon an old gentleman's personal appearance, he does not understand the pain he is inflicting, though I do not say, that if he did understand, he would shrink from inflicting it. But whether done from malice or ignorance, it is our duty in teaching boys to do all we can to reform this fault. We should teach them that they have no right to amuse themselves at the expense of the feelings of man or beast. We should try to impress upon them those kindly feelings and gentle manners which are the essence of courtesy, and in which we grown-up people are of course never deficient. I suppose we are all agreed about this; but life is short, and have not our boys to learn to dance and play the piano?

The other fault to which I allude is want of reverence for truth. Boys are so fond of fun that they are apt to forget all laws, Divine and human, for its sake, and hence they will delight in clever deceits and successful hoaxes, taking no shame and thinking no

ill. This is a painful truth about boys, and another point on which their moral sense must be and is gradually being enlightened. For my part it grieves me to see truth made light of, even in jest, and I look with most Puritanical eyes on such amusements as the First of April is sacred to in the juvenile calendar. Yet I cannot help chuckling over a clever trick which a brother dominie once played off on some of these smart young gentry. One First of April the boys of his class had the presumption to try to play off one of their seasonable pranks upon him. Unsuspicious, he fell into the snare, and was rather disgusted to find himself proclaimed, by a general snigger, an April fool. But he was equal to the occasion. Putting on a great show of magisterial dignity, he sharply rebuked the boys, pointing out to them the extreme impertinence of playing such a trick on a master, and concluded by ordering them all, before they went home, to learn by heart the thirty-ninth ode of the first book of Horace. They looked rather blank at this termination to their joke, and, when twelve o'clock came, sat down ruefully enough to master their task. But they looked in vain for the thirty-ninth ode of the first book, and might have looked till this day, if it had not struck them that they in their turn had been completely and successfully 'sold.'

As I say, we should lament these faults, and do all

that we can to eradicate them. I am persuaded that enough justice is not done to boys in the way of guiding rather than driving their moral instincts. You can teach boys a great deal more than you do if you try harder, and set more wisely about it. They won't care to do wrong if you can show them that they will be just as happy in doing right. But if you set your face as a flint against all kinds of fun, your pupils come to look upon amusement and wrong-doing as synonymous terms, and as amusement is a necessity of their nature, they suppose that wrong-doing must be so also. So the good dominie should encourage and watch, and as much as is possible or advisable, mix with the amusements of his boys, lest while he eats and drinks and takes his own pleasure apart, the devil comes unawares upon the flock, and has his will among them. Therefore, so far from frowning on or holding aloof from the sports of my boys, I think it my duty to show interest in the smallest of them, nay, even in the very tricks they try to play in my class-room. For instance, if a boy tries to distract our attention by producing meteoric phenomena on the roof or walls of the room through the agency of a piece of looking-glass, I would never think of flying into a passion, but I should put an end to the performance, and perhaps punish the performer in a good-humoured way, pointing out to him that he was a stupid fellow

for thinking that he should not be found out, and telling him how much more cleverly I had done the same trick when I was a boy myself. I don't find that the discipline of my class suffers from such amenities.

It is a good and hopeful sign of a boy that he is interested in purely boyish amusements; but it is a terribly bad sign when he begins to despise these, and takes to dressing himself up in gorgeous apparel, and frequenting the society of young ladies, and thinking himself a small man. I do hate to see a boy aping 'the swell.' Our outward appearance has more influence on our habits and manners than some philosophers would fain believe; the tailor is indeed a ruler and guider of men and boys—guider to no good, too often. I declare that I have known the extraordinary phenomenon of a boy completely and at once seeming to change his character with his clothes. In his every-day jacket and patched trousers he was a modest, merry schoolboy, but let him put on his Sunday suit, and adorn himself before a looking-glass, and lo! he was transformed into an offensive, ignorant puppy. The parents of the present day are not enough watchful to guard the outposts of boyhood against such attacks. Our youths, by dint of perseverance, attain the *toga virilis* too soon, and are straightway puffed up with pride, and endeavour to ape the conceit and folly which they fondly conceive necessary to a manly character. Oh

ye silly mothers who think your darlings would look well in a long-tailed coat, and set to work to persuade Paterfamilias accordingly, ye little know what trouble you may be working for yourselves and for them! Well will it be for you if you thenceforth find not Johnny or Bobby grow disobedient, deceitful, impure, and all because they fain would be men, knowing good and evil.

I speak strongly on this point, because of late years puppyism has been on the increase among boys. In my day a real boy would have as soon have thought of spending a holiday in standing on his head at the top of a steeple, as in frequenting the fashionable promenades of this city. We were off to the country to fish or to get birds' eggs, or we went to the school playground and had a hearty game, or at worst we stayed at home and read one of Scott's novels, and thereafter indulged in delightful day-dreams, in which most likely we figured as Ivanhoe or Quentin Durward, rescuing distressed damsels, and defying diabolical despots in all directions; but now too many of my pupils despise all this. They must lounge about the chief streets, fondly imagining that they are seen and admired—Heaven save the mark!—of all men. They must have their glass of beer and cigar, in summer evenings their croquet parties, in winter their dances with white chokers and dress boots, and whatever other such inventions

the devil has been permitted to introduce for the temptation and torment of genteel mankind. Alas! that he should have power over boys too, in such matters.

But all this is not boyish; in the name of honest boyhood I renounce and abjure it. No! it is our young gentlemen only who are bumptious and silly and ridiculous; our boys are unaffected and simple and wise after their light. At least they have too much sense to enjoy making fools of themselves, when they can have so much enjoyment from all good things, and most from what are smallest and simplest. This is the great blessing and privilege of boyhood, granted to boys that they may be enabled to live and be happy in spite of unwise schoolmasters and hard Latin rules and all the other troubles incident to their condition. And again I say, as I have said before, Anathema-Maranatha be the dominie who can have the heart to rob them of this blessed birthright—to be happy.

CHAPTER III.

THE TROUBLES OF BOYS; WITH THE SAD STORY OF THE BABES IN THE WOOD, AND SOME ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE OF THE SCHOOLBOOKS.

'Nec levis, ingenuas pectus coluisse per artes,
Cura sit, et linguas edidicisse duas.'—OVID.

BOYS, like men, have their troubles—more than fall to the lot of men, say some; less, if the opinion of others be received. Be this as it may, there can be no question but that boys bear their share of trouble more cheerfully and contentedly than men, and should have all due credit given them on this account. Trouble to a boy is like water to a duck; he is always getting into it, but it runs off his back as soon as he can manage to scramble upon dry land for a little.

The troubles of boys are threefold, being brought about by their superiors, or by their equals, or by themselves. Let us consider at present the first

division of juvenile troubles, those which, seemingly of fiendish malice and cruel want of sympathy, but in truth of real or mistaken kindness, are caused to boys by guides and governors.

To plunge at once into the middle of the subject, I confess that we dominies are to blame, if any one is, for the greater part of these troubles. It is the necessity for instruction, incarnated and represented in our persons, which is the bane of the boy's existence. I, and the like of me, are the darkest shadows over the young life—terrible thought! How my heart has bled as I have seen one of my boys bending over his book and faintly muttering, 'Oh Forty-seventh Prop., how I do hate you!' Through the open window of the room the sweet June breeze came peering, wondering, no doubt, to what end was the dull, dusty prison it had found its way to. Merry shouts and careless laughs were borne on its wings, to mock the sad captive of angles and parallelograms. Cruelly sweet visions of green cricket-fields and cool bathing places floated before his weary eyes. But there he sat at his hard task, and presently I heard him lift up his voice again, and exclaim, 'Oh Euclid, I wish you had died when you were a boy!' It was so hard for him to learn; yet learn he must, and I must make him; so on he sat, and on I sat, and to occupy my mind, and to fortify it against the compassionate impulses which might prevent me from

doing my duty, I began to turn over these thoughts about the troubles of boys.—This was the same young gentleman, I may mention, who went rushing about one morning in fearful haste, anxiously inquiring if anybody could tell him where to find a crib for the Greek Testament!

When such are our duties, is it to be wondered at that so many of our boys look upon us, to some extent, as the standing army of a hostile power, and suspect us even bearing gifts, and fight against us bravely, though in all kindliness and honour?

But they fight in vain. We are stronger of arm and of purpose than they, and in the end we conquer them, and deliver them over to be tormented. We bind on them heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, which we ourselves, very likely, would disdain to touch with the tips of our fingers. We compel them to learn by rote long ugly names, that thus they may know the earth they live on. We force them to gabble over lists of adverbs and prepositions, and harrow their young souls with every irregular verb that our language has in its torture-chamber. We put into their hands books containing abridged lectures on botany, chemistry, and astronomy, which they bawl over and hear explained with trusting acquiescence. This is called learning English, but it is only the first stage of the infliction.

The innocent victim now enters upon Latin, and

all unconscious of the truth, most likely rejoices in the increased dignity which accompanies his heavier bundle of cares. He gambols round the porch of the dread temple; he hears not the cries and sees not the blood of those that have preceded him into the dark wide-jawed cavern. Child-like he is tickled and attracted at first by the fantastic garb and the strange gestures of his new tyrant. But the novelty wears off; as the babe is led deeper and deeper into the wood, he begins to grow more and more suspicious of the character of his seducer, who only grasps his hand tighter, and drags him on faster, regardless of his fears. Presently they come to a halt in a dark glade; the villain's intentions become clear enough now. He pulls out the verb *sum*, and sends the weeping child to his knees to beg for mercy. His life is granted him; but he is to be a slave for long years. On he has to stumble at the heels of his guide, and now becomes conscious that he has companions in misery. Groans resound around him, mingling with his own, and drown to his ears the chirpings of the robins, who in the likeness of fellows of colleges, beneficed clergymen, gentlemanly poets, and such like, sit in pleasant nests among the green branches and complacently twitter to each other of the beauties of the prospect, and on the whole seem to enjoy it. The cruel guide turns out to be a robin also, and suddenly begins to

shower down on the little darlings the leaves of a tree called Delectus. Some day, our young friend is told, if he is a good boy, he too shall be a robin and have a nice nest, and be able to sit in the sun and sing; but he doesn't believe it, he doesn't desire it, he only wishes to get out of this horrid wood and go back to mamma.

The way is so hard, harder than the robins overhead seem to think, though they too were once little boys and travelled the same path. But either they have very unkind hearts or very bad memories, for if they see any of their successors stumbling or sitting down to sleep, or stopping to gather a flower, they will perhaps fly at him and peck him with their beaks, which in this part of the country are generally long and yellow, and may be split by having a hair put into them. And they seem to take a pleasure in leading the boys over the hardest and thorniest parts of the wood; nay, some of them even find delight in making hard places harder. For instance, there is a deep pit in the wood, into which many weak boys have fallen, and have floundered about hopelessly. Originally, it looked like this—

'*The Ablative is the case of circumstances which attend action, and limit it adverbially*'—which was bad enough.

But once upon a time certain clever and funny robins laid their heads together, and agreed to dig

the pit deeper, and did so till it was as deep as this—

'ABLATIVUS EST CASUS RERUM QUÆ CIRCUMSTANT ET ADVERBIALI MORE LIMITANT ACTIONEM.'

Having done this notable piece of work one summer afternoon, these robins flew back to their comfortable nests, and chuckled and winked to each other as they saw what a number of unfortunate boys fell into this trap, and how long they were in scrambling up the sides of it. Only they didn't peck the poor boys this time, because the most respectable robins are growing dignified now-a-days, and think it rather beneath them to peck boys. But they found out a new kind of torture, making the little wretches take a pen and a sheet of paper, and jump over the pit ten times, which was great fun—only not for the boys. Then the robins flapped their wings and stroked their breasts, and called upon all the world and his wife to come and see how wise they were, not forgetting to bring their children with them, and plenty of crumbs soaked in milk and honey as a bribe for the robins to take care of the children, and teach them how to jump over pitfalls. And some wicked people, who wrote for the newspapers, and so were worthy of no consideration, came and said that the robins were not so wise as they thought themselves, at which these fine feathered birds were very indignant, and said to each other, 'What an idea!' But

that was all they said, though they made a great noise over it.

Just as my metaphor has pursued its tangled and confused way, so the babes go groping through the wood, vainly hoping that it and the robins and the pitfalls are all a strange and horrible dream, the result of the pantomime at Covent Garden, preceded by turkey and plum-pudding at grandmamma's. But no. The villain who has robbed them of their freedom still leads them on, and to increase their despair, and to show the truth of the nursery story, another villain, if possible of deeper dye, comes forth to join him. They shrink back, and even cling to villain No. 1 for protection from his colleague. But the monster rushes upon them, brandishing a weapon of strange and dreadful appearance, and fiercely shouting at the pitch of his voice, 'Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delpha—so I've got you at last, have I?' something like the clown in the pantomime, only anything but funnily. Suddenly, the first villain changes into a pantaloon of morose and sullen aspect, and resigns the chief part in the work of torture to his fresher and fiercer brother in cruelty, who forthwith proceeds to slap and pinch the poor children in a shameful manner, and calling on them to observe how gracefully and naturally he can stand on his head, kicks out so as to throw them down, and then stamps on them, a trick which affords infinite amuse-

ment to the robins in the dress boxes. But this facetious ruffian reminds me that in the country he came from it was not usual to enact tragic scenes *coram populo*, so at this point I shall let down the curtain and leave the audience to imagine for themselves the agonies of his unhappy victims.

Pshaw! what is all this I have been saying? I have surely been drawing too gloomy a picture of the grammatical troubles of boys. These Christmas delicacies which I spoke of a little further back are no mere visions of fancy; the fact is, reader, I am a little bilious to-night, and inclined to look on the dark side of things; but I ought to know that my own boys are not so badly off as I would make out—or whose fault is it? In our school at least, these are the chief troubles on the road to learning; thereafter the way begins to be more broad and level. But there are schools in England, where robins of the longest-beaked kind have it all their own way, at which other needless sufferings are inflicted upon youth. You need not be afraid of my looking too much at the black side of the matter this time—I am not going to write any more of my own views till to-morrow morning, when I hope to feel better; I am going to tell in his own words the sad experience and confession of a repentant teacher in such a school, who has won honour for himself by an earnest, laborious, and otherwise useful life, but who has spent

precious and countless hours in digging a large pit, which he is now anxious to fill up, giving the bones of its slain decent burial therein, and rendering the way safe for future travellers on the same path. Here is the picture he gives of it, a *harrowingly* faithful one. I really didn't mean it. I'll never do it again. It is the only pun I ever made in print, and it slipped out unwittingly; but perhaps, gentle reader, you don't see it,—in which case, hold your tongue, and don't ask questions. I am going to tell you what this gentleman says; and if you have sense enough to understand the Sphinxical clue which I have just given to his identity, you will be able to see what right he has to say it. Perhaps some publisher of enterprise and capital might like to publish it as a companion volume to De Quincey's work, under the title of 'Confessions of a Latin Verse-eater.' Talk of baby-farming! Why, it is nothing to the wholesale slaughter of innocent dactyls and spondees which this penitent ogre acknowledges having been privy too. In the name of—but no, I must let him tell his own tale, or I shall have told it all for him, which would be much to the loss of my readers. So—by the bye, no wonder that our public schools resound with Tartarean groanings if such slippery stones have to be rolled up hill, and such shadowy waters can alone allay the thirst. Really now, I must keep you no longer, but I am in a wayward

humour to-night, and I wish you knew how hard it is for a schoolmaster to get out of his desk and allow another man to hold forth instead of him. Well, at length enter our penitent, at the head of a band of equally repentant brothers, bearing oblations for the growling public, and burning incense to the spirit of the age.

While I think of it, this is the confession of a man who excels in literature, not because, but though he has spent so much time in making and correcting Latin verses; and if any one believes that I am bamboozling the public, he may read the following, and much other edifying matter, in the book from which I am going to copy it:—

'At the age of thirteen or fourteen,' he says, 'the little victims, duly instructed in Latin verse, make their appearance. The large majority of them know as well as we know that they *have* not succeeded, and never, by any possibility, *can* succeed in acquiring the mysterious art. Without a conception of rhythm, without a gleam of imagination, without a touch of fancy, they have been set down to write verses; and these verses are to be in an unknown tongue, in which they scarcely possess a germ of the scantiest vocabulary, or a mastery of the most simple construction; and further, it is to be in strict imitation of poets, of whom, at the best, they have only read a few score of lines. English passages, of varying difficulty, but to them, for the most part, hopeless, are placed in their unresisting hands, accompanied by dictionaries mainly intended for use in *prose* composition, and by those extraordinary herbaria of cut and dried "poetical" phrases, known by the ironical title of *Gradus ad Parnassum*. The bricks are to be made, and such is the straw of which to make them. . . .

'In the natural course of things, a boy, long before he has mastered these elementary difficulties, will be promoted into a higher form, and presented with a more difficult phase of work. He is required, under

all the inexorable exigencies of metre, to reproduce, in artificial and phraseological Latin, the highly elaborate thoughts of grown men, to piece their mutilated fancies, and reproduce their fragmentary conceits. In most cases the very possibility of doing so depends upon his hitting upon a particular epithet, which presents the requisite combination of longs and shorts, or on his evolving some special and often recondite turn of thought. Supposing, for instance (to take a very easy line, typical of many thousands of lines), he has to write as a pentameter—

"Where Acheron rolls waters,"

he will feel that his entire task is to write—

"Where *something* Acheron rolls *something* waters."

His one object is to get in the "something" which shall be of the right shape to screw into the line. The epithet may be ludicrous, it may be grotesque, but provided he can make his brick, he does not trouble himself about the quality of the straw, and it matters nothing to him if it be a brick such as could not by any possibility be used in any human building. It is a literal fact that a boy seldom reads through the English he is doing, or knows, when it has been turned into Latin, what it is all about. . . .

"At the next stage of promotion, or often earlier, a boy is forced to begin a far more desolate and often hunger-bitten search for something, sarcastically denominated "ideas of his own," to clothe the skeleton, or the "vulgus," presented to him for his "copy of verses." Now, long and laborious as this course is, dreadful and laborious as is the miserable drudgery which it entails on the tutor, yet it is so universally unsuccessful, that by the time such a boy is required to do "originals," or to turn English poetry into Latin, he either succumbs in hopeless desperation, or only through cruel sweat of the brains succeeds in achieving a result which both he and his tutor equally despise."

This, reader, is what we do to our pupils,—not that I am so bad as the rest, but, in writing a book about boys, I feel that it would be mean and altogether out of place to desert my companions; so I shall cast in my lot for this once with the stupidest and cruellest of them, and take whatever share of the blame falls

to me. This is the way in which we heap troubles upon boys. Some of them live and learn through it all, and in due time serve as texts for us to preach the glorification of ourselves and our systems. Some, on the other hand, become broken-hearted, and run away to sea or go up for the army examination, and thus are emancipated upon comparatively easy terms. Others, perhaps the majority, survive indeed, but little more. We turn the boy out on the world, with a small bundle of useless learning, to look about for himself for a little wisdom.

We Christian gentlemen, however, are kind and unselfish, and it is only our own sons whom we treat in this manner. For if our advice be asked about the education of our poor, what a clamour do we raise that they shall be taught nothing but what is practically useful! So we bring it about that the boys at our parish schools have less troubles of this kind to go through than the pupils of our great public seminaries. I myself have an idea that all schools might be conducted on the same principle, namely, that of educating the scholars to do their duty in the world, and nothing more. I once ventured to propound this idea to a gentleman who crams boys for scholarships at the universities and such like occupations in life, and he turned up the whites of his eyes with horror, and called it 'Utilitarianism,' which, like Unitarianism, and all other -arianisms, is an abomination to

every accomplished person who has studied and profited by the Latin and Greek poets. This set me pondering as to why some people seem to have a horror of everything useful. Is it because their education has been of little use to them, except in the way of helping them on to dignified affluence and enabling them to look with much complacent contempt upon their Latin verseless fellow-creatures? But be that as it may, it is certain that John Bull is thinking of inquiring into the monopoly of brains which such persons claim to possess, and reverend head-masters are beginning to fear lest there should be something in common-sense and practical education, after all.

Some doubt has indeed arisen of late as to whether all these troubles are necessary, whether the path is so easy that we must sow it with thorns. Traitors have arisen in the camp, who have sworn to overthrow the old kings, and to set up a new dynasty with constitutional checks. Even while I write the fight is raging over the prostrate form of the English boy, always a more important person than he himself deems. From my quiet corner I can hear the shouts of the battle, and see the dust of the arena. 'English literature to the rescue!' shouts one warrior, fiercely brandishing a volume of Chaucer. 'Down with the classics!' is the war-cry of another doughty champion, who with his right hand wields a French dictionary, and

with his left a bottle of sulphuric acid, and a variety of other scientific weapons. And, hark, the cry is David! and from the cave of Adullam issues forth a rebel chief at the head of a band of bold outlaws, armed to the teeth with history, geography, and useful information. Meanwhile, the established tyrants are hoisting the standard of antiquity, and buckling on afresh the armour of their university distinctions. The younger ones among them seize pen and paper, and go forth to meet the foe at the Janiculum or elsewhere, and there will be beaten, slain, or taken prisoners, except a few, who, escaping, will shut themselves up in the Capitol, and be preserved for a time by the cackling of sundry geese, the sacred birds of Superstitio and Consuetudo. But the elder ones, the white-haired senators, disdain either to fight or fly. With their rods in their hands, they ascend into their oaken seats of office, and there await in awful silence the coming of the Goths and Gauls, that at the end they may die with proper dignity. Now the foe is on them, and they clasp each other's hands for the last time, and say a last word of farewell in Greek iambics, and for the last time, before the shrine of self-opinion, join in the solemn chorus, '*O tempora! O mores!*'

But I have allowed my prophetic soul to carry me too far on. I ought only to be beholding the beginning of the battle, hopefully yet fearfully. In the

interests of boyhood, I watch with alarm a certain deliverer, who in one hand bears a hammer to knock off the chains of syntax rules and Latin verse, and in the other a new coil to be substituted in their place, consisting, *inter alia*, of Comparative Philology, Hebrew, and a many-headed, indefinitely formidable monster yclept Science. 'Save me from some of my warmest friends!' may the boy well say, but meanwhile he plods on at his usual task, all unconscious of the battle which is being fought for his freedom.

I watch this battle anxiously, as I say, hoping that it may result to him in a true and just measure of liberty, not in the fresh bondage of *parvenu* tyranny, nor in the baneful license of a sudden anarchy. But I fear that when the leaders of the revolution have overturned the throne, they may take to quarrelling over the fresh distribution of power and plunder, and the confusion may end in the establishment of one military despotism, or several. May the history of the education of the next few generations not be written in the words of Horace!—

'Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.'

I have hitherto taken no part in this important conflict myself, for reasons with which I don't choose to acquaint the public. But some day an unknown knight will perhaps ride into the arena with his visor closed, and will fling down his glove; and you may

be sure, reader, that he will not fear to strike the shield of the most scholarly and heartless head-master that ever edited a Latin Primer, or of the most arrogant professor that ever cast a doubt on the inspiration of Genesis or the educational utility of Virgil. And may Minerva, the lady of the lists, the Queen of Love and Beauty, smile on me, and proclaim me victor—for when once I have made up my mind what is the good cause, I shall fight for it to the death.

I have done a little skirmishing in private, but it was an unprincipled warfare, of the guerilla nature, that I carried on. To tell the truth, I have changed sides more than once. I was a master in a school, ever so many centuries old, and there I lifted up my testimony, like a pelican in the wilderness, in favour of the doctrines of enlightenment and progress. Again, when my sphere of duty lay in a new-fashioned institution, where there was rather too much enlightenment and progress, as I thought, I praised the old things, and declaimed against the '*ignis fatuus* of a so-called general education,' with as much fervency and orthodoxy as any don of them all.

But at present it is the art, not the science of teaching that I profess to expound; I would only speak *ex cathedra* about the discipline and management of our schools. And here I am firmly con-

vinced that we schoolmasters add to the troubles of boyhood by our own stupidities, prejudices, indiscretions, and indigestions.

Any one who knows my practice and opinions knows that I am not going to join in the foolish cry of fond mammas and foolish philanthropists, which proclaims all schoolmasters who do their duty firmly and sensibly cruel and heartless oppressors. Boys can't be properly trained without a wholesome amount of due restraint and correction; but it should be our care that this be made as small and as little galling as possible. It should be, but is it always? For instance, I know a school where the boys are troubled by a chronic and constant state of humanitarian punishment. All of them, except the most timid and innocuous, are kept inwardly groaning from morning to night under a shower of vexatious impositions and detentions, which don't do much in the way of deterring them from mischief, but a great deal in the way of spoiling their handwriting and souring their temper. I once ventured to hint to the master of this school that it would be a good thing if he were to clear the air with an occasional thunderbolt in the shape of a slight flogging, which, in my experience, has more influence on the minds and less on the spirits of boys than any other kind of punishment. By punishing in this way, I suggested, a boy who hadn't learned his lesson, or had played in

school, might have a fair chance of learning his lesson next time, or of playing at the proper time and place. My professional brother looked at me reprovingly through his spectacles, and answered that my views on the subject had indeed a show of plausibility, but that it had long ago been settled by him, and certain other pundits like unto him, that flogging was too terrible a disgrace to subject a boy to. Then I objected that I believed that boys did not feel in the slightest disgraced by being flogged,—as, indeed, why should they? But this gentleman settled the matter by saying that they ought to feel disgraced; and as he was captain of his own ship, all I could do was to disagree with him, and to feel thankful that I did not sail under his command.

I myself have great faith in an instrument of correction called Lion, and so have my boys. We are mostly agreed upon this point, that his operations and effects are preferable to those of any other necessary evil recommendable in his stead. He doesn't cause them half as bitter or half as lasting pain as other practitioners, but has the tooth out at once in a workmanlike manner, and has done with it. Nevertheless, the fickle public are beginning to grow doubtful of his merits, and are being led astray by the advertisements of a new set of homœopathic doctors, who prescribe globules calculated to produce symptoms similar to those of the disease. Thus if a boy

doesn't do his task, they tell us we should give him a harder one. In other cases they advocate leaving nature to work by herself without our interference,—a very wholesome doctrine in some hands, but very dangerous in others. Now, I am one of the old allopathic school—though I trust that I do not carry out my principles so ferociously as the bleeding Galens of a past generation,—and I rather look with contempt on new-fangled nostrums. I think I have a right to do so, seeing that not only I, but my patients, are well enough satisfied with my own pharmacopœia. Sometimes I tell my boys about the opinions of these new doctors, and we have a laugh together over them.

I think it right to set forth my opinions clearly on this subject, because I feel that what I have already said about it has been misunderstood. Some people seem to think that I wrote my 'Book about Dominies' for the purpose of glorifying flogging as the chief end of boy, and were duly horrified at the 'grim glee' with which it was declared that I spoke of my instrument of torture. Whereas what I said was, what I say again, and what I mean to go on saying till people believe me, that in dealing with boys we ought to abhor silly sentiment scarcely less than cruel tyranny, and that the one does as much harm as the other. It is not fair to call me heartless on this account. Neither in practice nor theory am I

very Draconian; and I know that in my view of the subject I am representing the feelings of boys, who are surely the most interested parties in the question.

Yes, we may correct our boys if they deserve it, always with justice, discretion, and sympathy, and they will not be much troubled, but will take it all in good part, knowing in their hearts that we do well; but, my brother dominies, let us take heed that we add not to their troubles overmuch by hasty and foolish decrees, by cross looks and scornful words, by unjust actions and unkind restraints, by over-strictness and over-indulgence—yea, by allowing them to sin, and thus causing them to sorrow. The haunt of the Muses is not indeed wholly a garden of roses; yet there is no spot therein where, by kindly and patient care, we may not root up noxious weeds, and plant fruits and flowers pleasant to the eye, and good for the food of boy. To this end let us all labour, and not merely sit in our cosy arbours, drinking of the nectar, and carelessly hurling thunderbolts beneath, to crush whom they may.

I have dilated so far on this branch of my subject, that I must pause to take breath, and reserve the consideration of the other troubles of boys for the next chapter. But before I conclude, one word with you, indulgent reader. You may have observed that in this chapter I have been somewhat more sportive than is my wont, allowing myself to run off into all

sorts of allegories, metaphors, and conceits. The fact is, as you might see with half an eye, I am writing in the Christmas holidays, and don't feel such an obligation to be on my literary or scholastic p's and q's, as I generally do. But my boys will soon be coming back, and I must prepare myself to meet them, so in the following chapter I shall try to assume more of the sober gravity which some people may think suited to the dignity of my subject. Yet remember, that though I seem to have been speaking in jest, I have been speaking the truth, which is more than some very serious and solemn authors can say for themselves. And don't suppose that I am always given up to such levity, but believe me to be such a person as the celebrated Mr. Yorick, who, we are told, 'where gravity was wanted, would be the most grave or serious of mortal men for days or weeks together' —as some of my pupils have found out by this time.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TROUBLES OF BOYS—*continued.*

'Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit.'—VIRGIL.

I THINK I began the last chapter by indicating three divisions into which the troubles of boys naturally resolved themselves, and now I have got no further than one branch of the first division, at which rate my account of the troubles of boys will fill such a large proportion of this book as to cause a misconception of its end and objects, not to speak of promulgating a gross slander against the state of boyhood; so I must really try to get on faster.

Boys have not only troubles at school, but at home. —I had almost used the word *tribulations*, but I promised not to make any more puns, though, to be sure, it would only be the learned reader who would see the joke, and he, I am sure, would pardon me for the sake of its erudition. The boy's woes begin in

the nursery with tubs hot and cold, doses aperient and otherwise, and suchlike precautions for his health and safety. If he have a mamma who studies 'Buchan's Domestic Medicine,' or a grandmamma versed in traditional science of the same nature, or a nurse orthodox on the subject of dry stockings and clean collars, his young life may chance to be made more or less a burden to him some half-dozen times a day. Then, in due time, he is taken down to the drawing-room, and exhibited to visitors, and told that he must not move or speak or kick his legs—all of which is very right and proper under the circumstances, but very cruel nevertheless. And if by an unlucky chance his mother be my aunt Deborah, or one like unto her, he is not allowed to go anywhere without stipendiary female attendance; he is forced in cold weather to flatten his unfortunate little nose against the window-panes, and ruefully watch other boys who have nobody to take care of them and wrap them up in comforters, sliding and throwing snowballs, and otherwise letting loose the depraved tendencies of their nature. Then, for a treat, he is taken out in the carriage to pay visits, and sit on the edge of a chair, and hear the general demerits of his species, and his own private perfections dilated on, without feeling himself able to join in the conversation. No wonder that a boy so treated is often glad to go to school, to fly from evils that he knows

too well to others that he knows not, yet when he does know them, perhaps finds to be bearable enough, and not to be compared with the tyranny of domestic affection.

Many of the troubles of boys are connected with their garments. Economical parents *will* have their trousers made at home, and in such a manner as to call forth attention and ridicule from their companions at school; or insist upon their being habited in their big brother's jackets made down, against which indignity the spirit of boyish independence fiercely rebels. Your real boy is not a dandy, unless through the assiduous care of his mamma, but of course he doesn't like to be laughed at. As he grows older, too, another source of trouble may arise, if it be enacted that he be invested in the dignity of a high hat, vulgarly called a *tile.* The present generation of boys seem to submit to this infliction, so far as high-days and holidays go at least, with much equanimity, but in my day there were Anakim, giants among boys, who to the last held out against what was held to be an enormous injustice—and they were enormous, the hats of these days. We were proud of our boyhood then, and violently kicked against all efforts to reduce us from our noble state of nature to the cumbrous conventionalities of manhood. Legendary tales used to be whispered among us of heroes who having been forced to indue them-

selves with hats for a funeral or other solemn occasion, had literally spurned their oppressors, making footballs of them, and kicking holes through the crowns. Such a boy we looked upon as a second William Tell in courage, and in the justice of his cause. And oh! I remember one sad tale of a school-fellow of mine. He had lost his everyday cap, its useful, much-enduring existence had been ended in oblivion on a dust-bin, and an inhuman wretch in the shape of a parent obliged him to go to school in his Sunday chimney-pot. Imagine for yourself, reader, for I cannot describe, the shame and agonies which he endured and the jeers with which we greeted him. I, too, have had experience of sartorial troubles. I met an old school-fellow the other day, who remembered nothing of me at school, except one fatal defect in my character, which once was the bane of my existence, viz., *that my trousers were too short, and that I had had a piece of cloth joined on to each leg to make them longer.*

I dwell too much on these trifles, it will be said, though they are no trifles to boys, especially sensitive or unpopular ones. But I come to a matter which no one can call a trifle. Sermons are one of the great troubles of boys, and yet every orthodox parent would think it very culpable and dangerous neglect not to make his children undergo a proper amount of them. I have given offence already by my views

on this subject, and I fear I may give more. In my 'Book about Dominies' I ventured to doubt whether the moral influence of sermons, especially upon boys, was so great as some people imagine. For this and other heresies I have been very properly come down upon by a certain portion of the press, and my views have been condemned as being 'of the undogmatic class,' as one journal very mildly put it. But though many have been horrified at, no one, so far as I know, has ventured to answer the charges I made against this bit of conventional religion, except one clergyman, who sent me a very kindly and earnest letter on the subject, accompanied by a specimen of the sort of sermons he is in the habit of delivering to his boys. All I can say in answer to him is, that if all sermons were as short and as earnest as that one, I should not have so much to say against them.

The facts of the case stand briefly thus. Respectable Christians of the present day have agreed that they cannot keep alive any semblance of devotion or morality without listening at certain intervals, and in certain places, to the utterances, original or otherwise, of a gentleman in a white necktie, whom they are willing to regard as professionally wiser and better than themselves. The Reverend Mr. Johnson mounts the pulpit, we being chained to our pews and bound over to silence. He delivers a discourse, varying in length from ten to fifty minutes. We may or may

not attend to him; we may or may not understand him; we may or may not agree with him; but we are compelled to hear him. Perhaps we go to sleep; perhaps, if we can find an excuse for it, we stay at home and read the newspaper; but, at all events, we hold it as an article of faith that our boys shall wait regularly upon this means of grace.

At present I am not going to say a word for or against the utility of this practice. I will merely say, what I know to be true, that it is a great trouble for a boy to have to sit still, and listen for forty minutes to Mr. Johnson expounding that ninety-nine of God's sheep shall be lost, and that the hundredth, the one who feels and thinks and speaks like himself, is to go to heaven. And I will also say that I don't think very badly of the boy who doesn't listen to this, or who wonders, as I once did when a boy, whether it would be a nice thing to go to heaven, if one's friends and relations were going to hell.

I suppose I have said enough to alienate from me the sympathies of all pious people of a certain kind; but I will promise such persons this, if it will conciliate them, that if they will compose short and earnest and kindly and sensible sermons, such as boys can understand and appreciate, I will not only give them or their favourite divines opportunities for preaching these sermons, but I will undertake that they will be listened to and acted upon by juvenile

hearers, as well as by any genteel and well-behaved congregation in the most pious regions of Belgravia.

Ah me! the troubles of boyhood are many, and will be many so long as parents and teachers forget that they have been young themselves. But the boy's troubles are nothing to those which assail him when he grows a little older, and enters upon hobble-de-hoyhood. Boyhood is at least a settled state, under the influences of law and order, but the hobble-de-hoy is in the same unpleasant position as Mahomet when he was hanging between earth and heaven; his existence is a horrible state of anarchy, intervening between despotic authority and constitutional self-government. Hence he suffers many things from the pride of his superiors and the ignorance of his inferiors. But, though this digression is tempting, I must stick to actual boys, my proper subject, and some day I shall indulge myself by following out this train of investigation in a work I have long meditated, on 'The Hobble-de-hoy: His Nature, Properties, and Appliances.'

I will now pass on to consider the troubles which are brought upon boys through the agency of their equals. Boys are, as I have confessed before, and as I say again with shame and sorrow, far too regardless of the feelings of others; and hence they unscrupulously inflict upon each other innumerable woes, which might soften the heart of the most ruthless

dominie. How many boys are there, for instance, who know the agony of bearing an opprobrious nickname, fixed upon them by some thoughtless sally of a companion. I hope there are few who have felt this misery as I have done, the pain of hearing it repeated day by day, the anxiety lest it should slip out in the hearing of my relations, the sickening fear of it, which even in after life seized me whenever I met one of my school-fellows. Perhaps I was more sensitive on this score than most boys, but in every school in the country I believe that there are boys whose self-respect is daily injured, and aspirations after goodness checked, by one ridiculous epithet which is the mill-stone round the neck of their existence. If they are strong, you will say, they can easily guard against troubles of this sort, speedily convincing revilers by the arguments found most generally efficacious among boys. But if they are not strong?

It would, of course, seem ungenerous of a teacher to take advantage of his position to satirize his boys in this way, inasmuch as they are unable to escape or retort his witty epithets; but I know a dominie who has some talent of this kind, and who, wisely and kindly as I think, makes a practice, in certain cases, of giving appropriate nicknames to his boys. It requires a great deal of tact and knowledge of boy-nature to pursue his plan successfully; but in this respect, I believe, he excels the majority of dominies.

If he sees that a boy is likely to be handed down to posterity by a ridiculous appellation, he immediately sets his brains to work to bestow upon him another which is more striking and characteristic, but not nearly so offensive. Thus he calls one boy 'The Zebra,' because he has many stripes; and another, who is distinguished for remarkable perseverance in maintaining his position at one end of the class—not the right one—he likens to the leopard, 'because he does not change his spots.' These epithets soon became so popular that nearly the whole class applied to him for nicknames; and thus by dint of a little ingenuity he enabled them all to indulge their propensity for satire without hurting anybody's feelings.

I once hit upon a plan of this kind myself, when a boy. As I have hinted, I was distinguished among by companions by a very unenviable cognomen, which I certainly don't think I deserved. So I did all I could to give myself several other appropriate nicknames, hoping that thereby my original torment would be lost in the crowd; but I did not make use of this expedient till the first name was too deeply rooted in the minds of my companions to be entirely superseded, so my attempt only met with partial success; but I now make it known for the information of any slandered schoolboy who is sharp-witted enough to make use of it in time.

More patent than this source of tribulation, and

perhaps productive of a greater amount of perceptible misery, is the evil of bullying. There are bullies in all schools, I suppose—there certainly were bullies in mine. Both from within and from without was the trembling tiro, in my day, exposed to constant incursions of a terrible and irresistible enemy. Within there was an organized band of loafers, who, when they were not smoking or learning their lessons from cribs in holes and corners, used to amuse themselves by swooping down on the playground, and carrying off therefrom *vi et armis* any unpopular, timid boy, who, they knew, would not be much missed from the games of the rest. They would bear him to some secret den which was the centre of their operations, and torture and tease him till he began to cry, at which point they generally left off, and were content by forcing him to join their band, which would then set off in search of fresh victims. Without, there was an equally formidable danger. Close by our genteel institution was a "cads' school," attended by members of the Great Unwashed class, between whom and us there was of course a becoming hatred and constant guerilla warfare. We were not afraid of, and even courted, meeting their forces in pitched battles, fought with fists and stones, which generally ended in some such catastrophe as the breaking of a window or a lamp, and the appearance of a *Deus ex machina* in the shape of a policeman, before whom

our ragged adversaries instinctively fled; but the cads used to carry on another kind of warfare, which we, I must say, though I am no great advocate of the blood-and-culture school, were too chivalrous to resort to. In large bands they would lie in wait for solitary stragglers of our party, and gleefully seize the chance of subjecting them to revengeful indignities. I remember being captured once in a dirty, secluded lane, while fighting at the head, or, to speak more accurately, at the tail of a belated convoy of our fellows, who were too weak to resist, and too proud openly to run away. I remember that I was seized with a very unusual impulse of gallantry, no doubt the courage of despair, and like a juvenile Decius rushed upon the ranks of the foe. I saved my own party by this act of devotion, for the cads at once gave up the pursuit, and bore me off in triumph to a still dirtier and more secluded lane, where they trusted to be able to wreak their fiendish malice without interruption. If I could only recall my sensations, I have no doubt I might make a fortune by describing them in detail, after the fashion of latter-day novelists. But ere they had time to realize my fears, and before they had finished a few preliminary vituperations upon my social position and comparatively refined appearance, a female head (I never thought a woman so beautiful and good as on this occasion) was popped over the paling against which they had placed me, and a

shrill voice exclaimed, 'What's that you're doing to the laddie, Jock Tamson? If ye dinna leave him go this meenit, I'll tell yer mither on ye.' At which the goddess of Panic-fear struck my persecutors with dismay, and they took to their heels, leaving me free. Thus Apollo,[1] whose unwilling servant I was, preserved me; but it was for long one of the chief troubles of life to me and many other little boys to have to pass that dirty lane without sufficient escort.

But the pain caused by bullying is intensified, if one boy be bullied by another, and not by a number, —it is like adding insult to injury. This is the proper place for remarking that there are two orders of bullies—the brute and the reptile. The brute is the least odious of the two, and may, indeed, by careful and judicious training, be cured of his love of torturing others, and brought to be a decent enough member, as things go, of juvenile society. He is a coarse, stupid boy, who loves the infliction of pain for its own sake, and though he would perhaps rather see a little boy suffer, does not shrink from showing that he himself can be a Spartan if occasion demand. There is, not unfrequently, the seeds of good in his admiration of hardihood, and I am not indisposed to allow him the honour and privilege of being a genuine boy.

[1] A friend of mine has suggested that I should say '*sic me servavit a Polly*;' but, in the absence of specific information as to my champion's Christian name, I am unwilling to hazard the dignity of my style by such a foolish jest.

But I have not a word to say in behalf of the reptile bully, whom, in the name of honest boyhood, I hereby renounce and excommunicate, beseeching him to grow up to manhood as fast as possible, and to hide his shame in some such post as that of a third-rate theatre, where he will have a chance of discharging his black venom and cowardly malice upon the human race, without anybody paying much attention to him. It is he who gives didactic moralists cause to tell boys that a bully is always a coward, which is not quite true. He hates pain and danger himself; he toadies to boys who are not afraid of him, though he bullies those that are, and only requires to be turned upon by the weakest spirit to retreat in confusion. He delights, purely and simply, in producing misery, which is not always the purpose of your brute bully, who most likely scarcely understands what misery is, or at least how easily it can be produced. The brute bully works openly in brigand bands such as I have spoken of, but the reptile prefers to carry on his avocations alone, to enjoy the sweet feast of grief and terror and tears by himself—for he is greedy as well as cruel and cowardly. Oh! I remember the animal. I remember but too well how I used to shudder at the sound of his scoundrelly voice, how I used to hide myself in alarm at his approach, how I used to shrink from the suspicious offers of friendship which he from time to time made

me. I remember how he used to scribble on my books and pull my hair in school, and daily rack his ingenuity to vex me by cruel and filthy tricks. And the provoking part of it was that I found I might have thrashed him after all, if I had only tried. I did try at length. I struck one blow, and was free for ever. But even before my emancipation I had a great triumph over him. I met him at church one Sunday, and we sat so close together that we could have touched each other, but I wasn't a bit afraid of him. It was not the sanctity of the building to which I trusted, for against him that was little safeguard. But beside me sat one who, I knew, both could and would protect me, and before whom I well knew that the bully would be powerless and dumb. I was holding my father's strong hand all the time of the service, and, as I walked out of the church by his side, I could not resist casting a look of proud defiance on the loathsome animal whose malice I could for once afford to despise.

Ah, well! and is there no such suffering among men? Are there no bullies in the great world as well as in the world of school? Are the weak never trampled on by the strong, the gentle never jostled by the rude, the pure never slandered by the foul of mouth and cowardly of heart? Is a good man never hounded on to his grave by knaves and fools and bigots? And have we not a Father in heaven who,

if He see good to send us into this world to suffer, is ever ready to throw around us the shield of His love, to bind up our wounds with His infinite compassion, to be kind and tender to our shortcomings, and ready to hear our prayers?

Certain persons have stumbled upon a notable idea, which has had a very perceptible effect upon the education of boys. Seeing that we are all at war with each other, say they, let us fully recognise our position, and strive to accustom our boys betimes to this state of things. Let us teach them that it is the mission of the strong to oppress, and of the weak to bear oppression without redress till their own day come. Let us encourage them to crush out tender love and to delight in cruel jests. Let us cast them into a sea of fiery troubles, and leave them to sink or swim as they can. This is called by some people the morality of public-school life, and is greatly held in esteem by them as affording a course of education calculated, not indeed to root out such evils, but to prepare boys to meet them. Whether that preparation be more useful or fatal is a disputed point, but I know of another system of morality, said to be approved by most English educationists, which, while as fully recognising the existence of these evils, bids us fight to the death against them in our own hearts and in the world, that in due time they may be rooted up and cast down. And here there seems to me to be some contradiction between

two kinds of preaching indulged in by certain persons.

Is it not sad to see learned and Christian men, and even dominies, declaring it as their deliberate opinion that boys should be not only allowed but encouraged to inflict troubles on each other, the strong on the weak? No one can accuse me of being fondly sentimental or over tender in my views about the training of boys. I hate effeminacy and cowardice, and yet I believe that it is possible for boys to be brave and hardy without being cruel, merry without being impudent, manly without being precocious. Nor do I believe that a kind boy must be chicken-hearted, nor an innocent one foolish, nor a modest one sly. But I am a great heretic on some points, and do not at all agree with the admirers of the traditional system of heathenism, which seems to me to form the great feature of the much-vaunted discipline of certain schools.

But enough of the troubles caused to boys from without. We now come to the third division, the class of troubles most grievous to man and to boy, the troubles caused by themselves from within, by their own passions, and their own weaknesses, their own foolish desires, and their own impure thoughts. About these troubles, as we are all so well acquainted with them, I shall not say a single word, save this, that it is a great pity that boys do not see the reason

of their being made to undergo another class of troubles, whose origin is more apparent to them, and for which they blame us dominies, as I have tacitly allowed to be done in treating of the first part of this subject. But if they understood the meaning and the end of *tuition* more fully, they would surely esteem us more than they do, for our work is to rescue them from their worst tyrants—themselves,—and to defend them as far as may be from all the troubles and trials of life.

CHAPTER V.

THE FRIENDSHIPS OF BOYS.

'Amicitia: qua quidem haud sciam, excepta sapientia, nihil melius homini sit a Diis immortalibus datum.'—CICERO.

THE text of this chapter is a bundle of epistles now lying before me, some actual letters on fair, large sheets of paper, others hastily scribbled on scraps and fly-leaves of books, the faded writing on which is in two different, boyish hands. On examination, they would seem to be parts of a correspondence more affectionate than grammatical between two boys who had addressed each other under the playful appellations of χοιρος and σιαλος. From the following examples learn the style of all:—

'DEAR σιαλος,—What is the row with you. Are you wacksy at me. Why woudn't you look my way at rep. Didn't you see the fun I was haveing with Brown.—Yours affectionitly.'

The signature is supplied by a figure of an animal, supposed to be a χοιρος, or little pig. The next letter in the bundle is evidently an answer to the foregoing. It is written on a piece of paper, on which is printed the following inscription, slightly defaced by the act of tearing it off the title-page of some book in a foreign language :—

OPERA

PI SALLUSTII

BELLUM

TILINARIUM

ET

GURTHINUM.

Then in pencil :—

'MY DEAR χοιρος,—What bosh! What should I be waxy at you for? I had a headache at rep., but I am all right now. Come and have a bathe after school.'

Communication No. 3, written on the same piece of paper, and redirected :—

'All rihgt.'

A pause in the correspondence is now presumed to have taken place, and then here comes the next letter written again by χοιρος.

'I say, ain't this good. Pass it up to Danby.'

This is brief, but its meaning is supplemented by a slanderous picture of a gentleman in spectacles, with a wig and a superhuman nose, which, to prevent mistakes, is ostentatiously labelled 'Old P.' It furthermore bears marks of having been violently scored through by a pen, and thereafter thrown on the floor and crushed under foot. From these signs, and from the next note, I infer, with the assistance of memory, that this picture was detected by some authority unfavourable to the cultivation of the fine arts, and that its author was severely animadverted against.

No. 4—

'Never mind, old fellow, I will stay in and read out the lines to you, and we can have our bathe in the afternoon. What a muff Danby was to let the paper fall.'

The rest are much like these, some longer, and some shorter, all full of allusions to boyish scrapes and boyish pleasures, teeming with boyish chaff and fun, and with the spirit of boyish kindliness, though but few set phrases of friendship.

One of these correspondents—modesty forbids me to say which, as the orthography is in the one case so much superior to the other—was myself; the other is now a highly respectable gentleman engaged in commercial pursuits in a distant part of the world. What laughs we would have together over these epistles; but when I take them out of my desk as I

sit alone, and see again the faded characters that were once so familiar to me, a breeze full of strange and sad yet sweet music seems to stir my heart, the blessed memory of happy days gone by.

Once upon a time that boy was my friend, my *fidus Achates*, the image of boyish kindness and bravery and beauty which I set up in my heart, and believed in, and almost worshipped. I scarcely thought it possible for him to do wrong. I dare scarcely tell how happy I was in his company, or how miserable when I had been disappointed of meeting him, lest I should be laughed to scorn by those who believe that boys have no sentiment, no love except for mischief and ginger-beer. I would have done anything for that boy. It would have given me the greatest pleasure in the world to have taken a thrashing for him, to have offered myself up in his stead at the shrine of one of our mutual enemies, the masters. I was a coward, but I think I could have gone cheerfully to death if it were but hand in hand with him. I loved him as man loves man but once in a lifetime, and for years—too short and too few!—our love was the sunshine of my existence.

So I can understand what the late Frederick Robertson of Brighton says of his schoolboy friend George Moncreiff:—'How my heart beat at seeing him; how the consciousness of his listening while I was reading or translating annihilated the presence

of the master; how I fought for him; how to rescue him at prisoners' base, turned the effect of mere play into a ferocious determination, as if the captivity were real; how my blood crept cold with delight when he came to rescue me, or when he praised me.'

And the other day when I kept Henderson Primus in durance vile after school hours, for grievous offences against our principles of moral and mental philosophy, and when I caught Harold Douglas outside the door trying to comfort his friend by whispered conversation, and by passing jujubes through the keyhole—is it to be wondered at that I was not very severe upon naughty Harold, who had disobeyed my positive order that no one was to go near the prisoner? For in my own schoolboy days I had done the like, and I am still of opinion that both Harold and I might have done many worse actions.

A true, kindly boy will do anything for his friend, and this is one of the points in which boys are better than men. A friendship between men is generally cool, discreet, calculating; a boy's love is warm, enthusiastic, regardless of consequences. How many men are there who would risk blame, disgrace, misfortune, to save a friend? How many boys are there who do so daily! For if a boy suffer a cruel punishment, or give up a master's good opinion rather than betray a friend, do you think, my elderly reader, that the pain to him is less than

yours when you have to draw on your cheque-book, or are seen walking down Piccadilly with a disreputable character? Would you dare to answer your despot, the man who has power of dungeon and torture over you, the editor of the paper for which you write, the master of the school in which you are a penniless usher, the great Lord Scatterbrains, whose steward or attorney or flunkey you are, as one of my boys answered me the other day? He is one of the pleasantest, most gentlemanly boys I ever had to do with, and I never heard a rude word from him but on this occasion. I was examining him as a witness at a judicial inquiry, and without thinking, I asked him a question, by answering which he could not help betraying a friend. I shall never forget his reply, which was so prompt that he had not time to put it into more reverent words—'I shan't tell you, sir.' Some dominies would have flogged him there and then for this blunt speech. I didn't. But I begged his pardon for having asked him the question.

Too often boys' friendships cease with boyhood and the boyish kindliness which brought them forth; yet sometimes we have examples of their extending into manhood and bringing forth goodly fruit. Nay, there are stories of friends who have lost sight of each other for long years, yet have never forgotten the kindliness of their youthful intercourse. Most readers of history are probably familiar with the

story of the two Westminster boys of the seventeenth century, who at different periods of their lives stood each other in good stead. Their names were, if I forget not, Nicholas and Wake, the first a timid boy, born of Puritan parents, the second a reckless, rollicking, spirited young fellow, of hereditary loyal principles, and presumably of Tom Brown fortitude. Nicholas, like some Radicals of the present day, seems to have had a strong dislike to public school discipline, and, in particular, to what is grandiloquently called 'corporal punishment,' and so, having got into a scrape, manifested such distress of mind and fear of the inevitable consequences, that his friend Wake volunteered to take the whole matter on his own shoulders, probably looking on such an affair with great coolness as 'all in the day's work.' So Wake bore the blame and the flogging, and years rolled by, as the novelists say—Charles the First shuffled himself off his throne, and into his grave. My Lord Protector ruled in England with armour under his coat, and his enemies trembling at the sound of his name. Timid, studious Master Nicholas had developed into a fierce and godly politician, a pillar of the Church and an oracle of the Law. Bucolic Master Wake, being a gallant, unreflective fellow, was of course a violent loyalist, groaning over the wickedness of the regicide age, and planning and plotting against the Commonwealth with as much gusto and

as little success as he had no doubt plotted against the Westminster masters. At length it came to pass that he was detected, and fell into the hands of the enemy, and was tried for high treason—the presiding judge being, it is said, his old friend Nicholas, though perhaps this circumstance has been added for the sake of dramatic effect by poetic historians. At all events, Judge Nicholas did not forget his obligation in the matter of flogging, for, though his duty compelled him to pronounce sentence of death, he never rested till he had made use of the favour in which he stood with Cromwell to obtain a pardon for his old friend. I daresay Wake had forgotten all about the trivial circumstance to which he owed his escape from a traitor's death, but he must ever afterwards have been sincerely convinced of the truth of the maxim, 'A friend in need is a friend indeed.'[1]

There is this at least about boys' friendship, that it is eminently honest. One boy does not speak good of another before his face, and bad behind his back. Now there are grown-up people, who are by courtesy called friends, who will dine with each other, and smile and joke and speak pleasant things to each other, and epistolarily be sincere and faithful, and

[1] I had forgotten, when I wrote this little anecdote from memory, that it is told better than I can tell it in the *Spectator*, No. 313. The author of this paper asserts Judge Nicholas to have been one of the heroes of this story; but it is a matter of doubt as to whether it were not another eminent lawyer of that period, whose name I cannot recall.

yet for all that will hate one another very cordially and mutually. I have had many friends of this sort since I ceased to be a boy, and have found their conventional affection a most unsatisfactory substitute for a regard in which there is no such hypocrisy. No; give me a boy's love or a boy's hatred, which are both open and sincere.

But a philosophic essay like this must not merely be taken up by indiscriminating panegyric of its subject. Anecdotes and rhapsodies are a temptation and a snare of mine, which I really must not give way to so much as I have hitherto done. To prove the sincerity of my temporary repentance, I shall at once proceed to anatomize schoolboy friendship in an orderly manner, with a few remarks upon its chemistry and physiology, taking as my model the way in which our parish clergyman handles doctrinal subjects of sufficient importance to be dignified with a *firstly*, *secondly*, *thirdly*, and so on.

The first notable point about schoolboy friendships, as about all other friendships, is that they require the concurrence and assistance of two persons, of whom one always plays the most prominent part. One takes the lead, the other follows; one loves, the other allows himself to be loved. The difference may be very slight, but I suppose that never yet were two human beings joined together for any specific purpose, of whom one was not stronger than the other

in force of will and intensity of purpose. So the friendship will always be more or less strong on one side or the other, and one of the parties will always have more or less influence in it than the other. Hence one of the friends will always exercise a certain power over the other, and will sway the direction in which the results of the friendship shall turn. Sometimes, as I have said, this difference may be very slight; sometimes it may be so great that one of the friends will be a despot, the other a slave.

If the friends are almost equal in moral strength there will most likely be a struggle between them for the first place, the result of which will be either a total separation or constant bickerings. But if they are good-humoured boys their love may flourish and bear fruit even under such unfavourable circumstances, nay, these passing storms may only make it take the deeper root, and bloom the more brightly in seasons of sunshine. Hence arises the strange peculiarity in some boy friendships, that they seem to consist almost wholly of a succession of quarrels, with a few lucid intervals of reconciliation. I have watched more than one couple of inseparables, who never appeared to me to meet without hard words, and even blows. Indeed, I remember one such union, which was considered by one of the parties quite unsatisfactory because it had not been sealed and settled by a mutual pugilistic encounter. 'I want him to try me, but he won't,'

was the aggrieved Damon's complaint to me. This is all very puzzling. I can explain, as you see, how this peculiarity arises, but I fear a more sage moral philosopher than I must take in hand the task of showing how these frequent and threatening storms turn out to be only fair winds to swell the sails of friendship. I have heard that the same problem is to be solved in the matter of the friendships brought about by that ill-educated youth Cupid, but in these I have had little experience.

As perfect equality between friends is a thing neither to be desired nor hoped for, it must not be surprising to find that boys who become friends are seldom alike in disposition and temperament—nay, are often the very moral antipodes of each other. 'Like draws to like' is not, I should say, the rule in the most marked schoolboy friendships, though it generally influences a boy in the choice of his companions. You may see a rough bold boy the friend of the timid gentle one; the jovial, noisy, fickle, of the quiet studious youth; the fiery, wrathful lion, of the good-humoured, bleating lamb. And if the lamb only consent to follow patiently in the footsteps of the lion, agreeing to give up to him his majesty's share of all plunder which may be the result of their co-partnership, I am not sure but that such friendships will not prove to be the most lasting and the most satisfactory, always providing that the lion lead not the lamb

into the wilderness, where his soft fleece may be torn away by thorns and his tender limbs mangled by traps and hunters and the teeth of savage beasts, which his guide looks on with careless contempt, yet cannot always defend him against.

But there is one point in which, as a general rule, it is good for a pair of friends to be somewhat equal —age. There is a proceeding in schools known as 'taking up,' which the ignorant reader must please to understand as a big boy's descending from the Olympus of the fifth or sixth form, and being graciously pleased to confer the honour of his friendship upon a little chap, curly-haired, rosy-cheeked, bold, impudent, precociously wicked, or in some other way attractive above his uninteresting fellows. This is in general bad for both parties. The older boy will most likely be lowered in the eyes of his equals by intimacy with a boy so much younger than himself; while the younger will run the risk of learning too much about the bad habits of some of his elders before he has enough strength of mind to give him a chance of resisting their evil influence; and thus will often become a perfect scoundrel, versed in all sorts of filthiness and blackguardism and dishonesty, while he is yet a mere child. Besides, a boy who is 'taken up' is, of course, looked upon with a certain jealousy and dislike by those of his own position in the school. On this account older boys would do

well to reflect before they commence intimate friendships with their juniors; and the said juniors, if they can reflect, should ponder well before giving up marbles and independence for the dangerous though seductive honour of sixth-form patronage. Not that there have not been many useful, happy, and lasting friendships between boys of very different ages, wherefore I cannot wholly condemn such unions. For, look you, there are insects who from all flowers suck sweet nourishment; and there are some boys to whom all things are pure and good,—but there are others.

One kind of friendship of this sort is looked upon with especial suspicion; and yet, in my experience, has produced very good results. I mean a friendship between a boy and his master,—not a common thing, yet not so very uncommon. Many such friendships are bad, and do little but harm. Certain foolish schoolmasters are struck by the face or the manner of a boy, the way in which he pulls off his cap, the profound attention which he pays in school, or some other real or seeming good quality, and straightway proceed to consort with him, and ask him to tea, and hold him up as an example, and, perhaps unconsciously, to show him favour, to the disadvantage of the other boys, who, of course, don't at all approve of this. But there be dominies and dominies, as well as boys and boys. I myself make a practice of forming

intimate friendships with my boys; but it has been my experience that no boys have been more respectful and obedient to me in school, and to none have I been more severe and Brutus-like than those who, in private, were in terms of the greatest familiarity with me; but to play this game you must have tact, common-sense, and a holy love of justice. Dear me! what a conceited paragraph I find I have been writing; but with your leave, good reader, we'll let it stand. After all, if I thought myself a fool, I should not have undertaken to instruct the benighted public and reprove my careless brethren.

In one respect juvenile friends may be as unequal as you please. Your grown-up gentleman chooses as his friends and associates men of his own rank, who may sit at his table without offending Mrs. Grundy, and may ask him in return to equal banquets. Now the real, unsophisticated boy will make friends, preferably, perhaps, with boys of his own position at the court of King Sartor, but failing such, with any two-legged creature in trousers who hates Latin grammar, and loves running and jumping and laughing. The natural sentiments of boyhood are in favour of universal fraternity and equality. It is by judicious education that he learns to look with contempt upon poor animals in corduroys, who are only like ourselves in being God's creatures. I have known such friendships which have been productive of much

happiness and profit. I have known a boy whose father's purse and pedigree were beyond suspicion delight in the company of a ploughman's son, and spend many merry holidays drinking with him of the full cup of healthy nature. But time went on, and my young friend got a gold watch and the *toga virilis*, while the oft-visited glass gave him dim promise of coming whiskers. So he took to reading novels and peacocking with his mamma, and his rustic friend hung about the farmyard in vain, and in vain waited near the gate of the big house, with black, curly Rover trotting by his side; but Jonathan came not. So Rover and his master returned home, meditating much upon the instability of human affairs. Thereafter the intimacy dwindled rapidly down, and before long was at an end.

'It should never have begun,' will exclaim the prudent mother of a genteel family. I don't know, ma'am. There is a kindly sympathy between man and man, which seems better to me than much Latin and more Greek. There is a knowledge much despised by you and the like of you—a knowledge of what is said and thought and felt and suffered by that considerable body of Englishmen who are poor and ignorant and horny-handed;—a knowledge this which is not usually included in the curriculum of a polite education, yet a knowledge which is to be gained at any price, think some men, by the rulers

of the next generation, else they will be taught it with a vengeance some day. And if hoarse Demos once arise to teach in England, who can say where the lesson will end? Therefore, let us be wise in time, and set our respectabilities in order, for what must come will come, in spite of Mrs. Grundy.

It seems to be a law in nature, that what is quickly produced as quickly decays. So we must not be surprised that many sudden schoolboy affections flourish vigorously for a time, but soon die away, having no depth of earth. Damon perceives Pythias, and feels his soul drawn warmly towards him. Pythias catches the infection; they swear an eternal friendship. The heat soon burns out; the affection is spoiled by being too much overdone at first. I have noted that the usual point at which such unions begin manifestly to dissolve is when matters are so far advanced that Damon asks Pythias to visit him at the parental mansion, or *vice versâ*. Their friendship might go on for a time, if they could only see each other occasionally; but let Damon go and stay with Pythias for a fortnight, and they will very likely grow tired of each other's society, and quarrel before the fortnight is half over. True friendship is like corn in this respect, that too much sun is sometimes as bad for it as too little.

The best and most enduring friendships are those which spring up and ripen by degrees, both in storm

and sunshine; in which kindly thoughts grow in two hearts slowly and silently, and

> 'As effortless, as woodland nooks
> Send violets up and paint them blue.'

Damon and Pythias come gradually to know and to like each other. They find themselves always playing in the same games, and getting into the same scrapes. They take to writing notes to each other in school. They agree to walk together on Sunday afternoons. They make a point of sharing with each other their joys and sorrows, their cakes and bull's-eyes. They speak to each other of their homes, of their mothers' and sisters' love—last seal of boyish intimacy; and perhaps in the beauty of a summer evening they whisper more deep and sacred confidences, which boys seldom dare to put into words. And all this time, they have never said that they loved each other, only showed it day by day.

In most cases, I should say it was not good for a boy to have too many friends. There are some men, and some boys, who are 'Hail fellow! well met' with every one; who have a kind word for even the sneak and the swindler. This kind of *bonhommie* is a quality much admired by unthinking persons, but I am very suspicious of it. Mere good-humour, perhaps, does as much harm in the world as malignity. It is certainly far inferior to real love; and when we find a boy scattering it abroad right and left, we may

infer that what is thus thoughtlessly divided is of little value.

But I like to see a boy making and sticking to one friend. There is something in that boy—some fulcrum on which we can rest our lever to raise him from the slough of sin and ignorance. It is your *nil admirari* boy that is the horror of us dominies, he who is sullen and indifferent, and 'doesn't care.' There is little hope of such a one; but in the quick and spirited natures, we can seize upon their very faults, and turn them to good account.

We like, then, to see a boy form some enduring friendship,—come forth from the thoughts and desires of his own heart, and rejoice to worship self in another and holier temple. Even when to human eyes such a friendship seem dangerous we do not always despair, knowing that God can work by our weak hands to bring good out of evil. But how much greater is our joy to see a firm friendship between two boys of which nothing comes but good. Earth hath nought more sacred and beautiful than such a union, the history of which has thus been written—

> 'And we with singing cheered the way,
> And crowned with all the season lent,
> From April on to April went,
> And glad at heart from May to May:
>
> And all we met was fair and good,
> And all was good that time could bring,
> And all the secret of the spring
> Moved in the chambers of the blood.'

Reader, I once knew a boy who was mean and selfish and cowardly and vain and bad-tempered, and was, accordingly, despised and disliked by his teachers and companions. It seemed as if his life were to be from the beginning a burden to himself and to others. But God, in His mercy, sent him a schoolboy friend, who, all unconsciously and silently, taught him that it was good to be brave and kind and pure, so that it came to pass that he arose from the sleep of death, and went forth to seek for the armour of light, in which he has since striven to fight a good fight against the foe that once held him in bondage. Such a man cannot but hold holy the pure love that brings not only joy but light and strength to the soul.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RELIGION AND MORALITY OF BOYS.

'Puras deus, non plenas adspicit manus.'
LATIN PROVERB.

IT is a commonly received opinion among the laity, and, alas! among some men calling themselves dominies, that boys are, as a class, utterly, hopelessly Pagan, thoughtless and conscienceless as regards religious belief and moral conduct—an opinion which we English have embodied in the slanderous epithet 'knave.' We hold them to be practical proofs of that depravity of heart which we all theoretically believe to be our own state. They are considered, especially by sour old maids and cynical young bachelors, to take delight in all manner of evil, and to be only capable of assuming a semblance of virtue under the influence of threats or blows. 'If you see three boys together, thrash them; for either they have been, are doing, or are about to do, some mischief,' was the dictum of a

certain learned man who once 'kept a school and called it an academy,' but early in life had the grace to see that he was not called to our noble profession, and betook himself to writing dictionaries and uttering such precepts as the foregoing. And yet he, the calumniator of boys, was himself but a boy all his life: a boy in his contempt for the shows and shadows of worldly happiness,—a boy in his generous love of right and goodness, as well as in his narrow and prejudiced conceptions of them,—a boy in the earnest, anxious sorrow which he showed for his faults, when recognised,—a boy in the kindness he felt to his friends,—a boy in the open enmity which he bore to his foes;—only not a boy in his voracious love for books, and the patience with which he suffered the attentions of that toadying Mr. Boswell.

But leaving this author out of the question, for from acquaintance with unfavourable specimens of the article, he was doubtless unduly prejudiced against boys and Scotchmen, we could quote hundreds of examples of the low estimate formed about the morality of boys, by the men who in this world are considered great and good. The Reverend Mr. Johnson is understood to be such a man by no inconsiderable section of society, and, when listening to one of his eloquent addresses to the young, I have been greatly moved with indignation to see from what an infinitely higher spiritual platform he took it for granted that

he was giving warning and exhortation. Such addresses and such opinions have moved me to write on the religious feelings of boys, in the attempt to prove what I and many others believe, that healthy and happy boyhood is not so much the kingdom of the devil as some people seem to take a gloomy delight in thinking it.

But who am I, that I should set up my opinion against that of the Reverend Mr. Johnson! A sceptic, a latitudinarian, a reviler of dignities, that gentleman will tell you. Unsafe, unsound, unscriptural, many of his congregation have already declared. Indeed, I hold strange and startling views of morality, views which many Englishmen hold in their hearts, though from fear, or laziness, or indifference, they may give no utterance to them. I may have heard of a Christian bishop who was clothed in broadcloth and fine linen, who fared sumptuously every day upon French dishes and old port wine, who kept up his mitred carriage and his peerage of the realm with due apostolical pomp, and who made a violent outcry when Cæsar interfered to render unto God some part of the things that were His, and proposed to reduce his lordship's revenue to a paltry five thousand a year; and I may have read of an ancient heathen, who was ignorant and fierce and stern-hearted, but who all his life fought not only with his foes but with himself, striving not vainly to

bring his body into subjection, to crush out covetousness from his heart and delicacy from his members, to school himself to be fearless of death and pain for his country's good, and who never flinched from his narrow idea of virtue, till, perhaps on the bleak hillside of Thermopylæ, perhaps in the hands of Carthaginian torturers, perhaps in the Forum, amid the angry faces of an ungrateful mob, he yielded up his spirit to the Unknown God, whose dimly revealed law he had ignorantly, though honestly, tried to reverence and obey. I have often contrasted two such men in my mind; and though his lordship, the episcopal peer, may have edited more than one Greek play, and written a learned and voluminous work on the apostolical succession, I dare scarcely say what the result of the contrast is to my mind. I have said enough, without being more explicit, to warn the Reverend Mr. Johnson and his flock that they may not consider me fit to handle religious questions; but if they will bear with my shockingly loose views, and only listen to what I have to say on behalf of boys, I will give them leave to place me for ever afterwards on their Index Expurgatorius.

We are apt to judge of men more by their words than their deeds, and I believe that boys are considered irreligious chiefly because they don't talk so much about religion as their elders. I have indeed known boys—what schoolmaster has not?—who were

both in word and deed earnest and consistent Christians, not only at church or at home, but in the school and in the playground; and I have honoured such boys. I have noticed with less pleasure striking instances of a juvenile Pharisaic spirit, which I was not altogether free from myself when a boy. I remember how I once rebuked a companion of mine for fidgeting and yawning in church, which I never did—at least not so much; and I remember how, when I wished this same boy to join me in a piece of deception, he at once refused, without any violent display of moral indignation, but with a very decided, 'I won't tell a lie.' I hope I blushed all over, and felt thoroughly ashamed of myself. I believe, also, that you may even imbue a boy pretty thoroughly with those charitable doctrinal prejudices which seem so often to go hand in hand with the highest spiritual states. A boy once told me, with 'bated breath, as if he were communicating something awfully and unspeakably bold, that his father believed that Roman Catholics might get to heaven! I can give a more striking instance of juvenile orthodoxy. In a school at which I was a master, there was, many years ago, a young Jew, who, by express arrangement, was allowed to remain in another room during our morning prayers. This indulgence towards heresy grievously vexed the souls of two of his companions, who, strange to say, had not hitherto been noted for any superabundance

of pious devotion and zeal; but after having been much exercised in mind for some time by this scandal, these juvenile bigots at length resolved to make an effort for the heretic's conversion. From a spirit of due humility, or for other reasons, perhaps an aversion to Erastian principles, they took care not to inform the school authorities of their design; but one day they seized on the person of the unlucky young Israelite, and dragging him off to a secluded spot, threatened him with various and grievous tortures if he did not instantly repeat the Lord's Prayer. The Jew, with true heretical obstinacy, held out stoutly, and would have undergone terrible sufferings for his faith, if a Gallio had not appeared to the rescue, in the shape of one of the masters, who, on understanding the state of the case, laid hold of the amateur Inquisitors, and brought them before the temporal authorities of the school. This tribunal being animated by the mawkish spirit of toleration which characterizes the nineteenth century, it may be guessed that the missionary zeal of these young gentlemen was promptly rewarded by the crown of martyrdom. I should not insert these trivial stories if the religious feeling which they illustrate did not seem to me to resemble very closely that of some eminent Christians both of past and of present times.

But I admit that boys who make much open profession of religion are the exceptions, while I deny that

this proves them irreligious. I happen to know two brothers, whom we will call James and John. James is a quiet, gentle, thoughtful boy; his brother a noisy, restless, jovial fellow, whom everybody of course calls Jack. James is very highly thought of by his mother because he likes the Third of St. John better than any other chapter in the Bible; while Jack's spiritual deficiencies are much deplored by her, inasmuch as he expresses a decided preference for the story of David and Goliath; but Jack is certainly a much commoner type of boy than James, so let us take him, and consider whether he is utterly and hopelessly a child of the devil. No, I reply assuredly, remembering how pluckily he fought the other day with the big Goliath who was bullying the little chap.

Old ladies believe that boys are hardened in iniquity, and proud of their wickedness, that they not only do not profess to be good, but openly repudiate the idea with scorn. The charge is partly true, but the force of it is founded upon a misuse of words. Good behaviour, technically so called, is a state of mind and body repugnant to the ordinary boy. The gainer of the good conduct prize at school is not unfrequently looked upon by his companions with pity not unmingled with contempt—perhaps justly, perhaps not. But this anomaly (for it will seem an anomaly, if I can prove that boys are as virtuous as I believe them to be) arises from a difference between

boys and their elders as to the meaning of the word *good.* A friend of mine, who understands the secrets of boyish nature, was talking to Master Jack, above mentioned, the other day, and after enticing him to open his heart as freely as if he had been speaking to one of his companions, he asked him, 'Are you a good boy?' 'Oh no, sir,' was the instant reply, with a frank smile, and my friend was not so much horrified at it as the Reverend Mr. Johnson would have been. The young gentleman is, indeed, not a good boy in one sense of the word. He is tricky and thoughtless, and comes in for his fair share of what is going in the way of floggings and impositions. But though he is of a very hasty temper, I have seen him, when accidentally hurt by one of his companions, biting his lips and making a great struggle to hide the pain, and not to feel angry. And I have known him come to me, of his own free will, and offer to take forty stripes, not saving one, if I would let off a more timid companion from a lesser punishment. And I believe that if I were to set the slightest point of schoolboy honour on the one side and the *summum supplicium* of our penal code on the other, he would choose the latter as unflinchingly as an ancient Roman, though probably with less speechifying and self-glorification. I shall never forget the hearty and spontaneous exclamation of disgust which escaped from his lips one day when the boy sitting next him told

me a downright lie. And yet he is a heathen and a publican in the eyes of some, and perhaps in his own! Nobody ever told him that all this was being good. He thought that to be good was to be grave and quiet and calculating and decorous, and, in its highest development, to wear a long-tailed coat and a white necktie, and perhaps spectacles, and to read big books with hard words in them, and to like going out to old ladies' tea-parties. And is it to be wondered at that he did not wish to do violence to his nature by being good after this fashion!

I confess that I try to teach my boys differently, though I know that I may be blamed for it by some people. I tell them that they are not enlisted under the banner of the devil, but in the service of God, and that it is a good and a pleasant service, in which grave old men and gentle women and merry boys may serve side by side, and alike be useful and happy. I teach them that to be good is to be diligent in their business, merry and frank in their amusements, affectionate and obedient to their elders, and honest and unselfish towards each other, and I don't find them more backward than men to learn such lessons. One result at least of my teaching, is that they trust in me and believe me, knowing that I sympathize with their difficulties and dangers. They don't practise the hypocrisy of pretending to be *good* in the grown-up people's sense of the word

before me. I encourage them to do just as they would do, and to talk just as they would talk if I were not with them, and therefore I consider myself more of an authority about their moral state than those schoolmasters who stand upon their dignity, and labour to impress their pupils with nothing but respect and fear. Little wonder that such men do not see clearly the bright side of boy nature. But my boys tell me their feelings openly, and consult me as to their doubts. It is not three days ago since a boy rushed up to me and exclaimed—'Oh, sir, Smith says it's wrong to chase cats! Do you think it is?'

I need not mention the opinion which I gave on this case of conscience, but it set me thinking that the moral nature of boys is only more ignorant, not less strong than that of men. A boy has not so much knowledge of goodness as a man, but he has more faith in it. The true boy believes in as much of God as has been clearly revealed to his little mind, and earnestly and bravely acts up to his belief, showing it forth by his works. He loves God's law not perhaps so much in word or in tongue as his elders, but more surely in deed and in truth. Such a boy as Mr. Johnson would teach us to be a child of Satan, will suffer himself to be scourged, imprisoned, or banished rather than do what is set down in his code as mean or dishonourable. A boy of ordinary gene-

rosity, if he has any money, will spend a proportionately far greater part of it upon his companions, than grown-up people spend upon their hospitalities and charities. The average boy, I am certain, fights harder and more bravely against his besetting sin of idleness, than the average man fights against luxury and avarice. A boy may be quick of temper and sharp of tongue, because his nature is frank and honest, and he knows not to play the hypocrite, but he bears malice far less than and not half so long as a man does. Boys are clearly wanting in many of those virtues mentioned by Paul as forming that standard of Christian excellence typified by the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal, but I venture to say that they do possess, as much as and more than their elders, other good qualities commended in the same chapter. And, above all, this; that a boy does not hate reproof nor despise correction, does not harden his heart if detected in wrong-doing, and listen to pride urging him to fresh sin, stifling the wiser and holier voice of conscience. No, to a boy there is little shame in the most imperative duty taught by Heaven to man, to confess that he has fallen short of God's law, that he has done what he ought not to have done, and left undone what he ought to have done. How few men are there who will honestly confess this with due humility and contrition! But how often do we schoolmasters hear such confessions,

sometimes indeed feigned, but oftener from the heart, sincere in intention, however feeble in execution! And if a boy's repentance is wanting in what is called a high spiritual element, it is at least eminently practical and real. Its essence is true sorrow and μετανοῖα, which has but little dealing with the ordinary forms of religious ceremony or sentiment, and therefore has escaped the notice of Mr. Johnson and his disciples. For if a good boy—I use *good* in my sense of the word—does wrong, he does not conceive it necessary to hire the services of a dozen individuals, more or less, to the intent that they may array themselves in white surplices, and at a proper time, in a properly built and consecrated building, may intone for him behind a carved screen a confession that he is a miserable sinner; nor yet does he derive satisfaction and peace of mind from hearing a man in a Geneva gown complimenting the Creator, in a long and rambling address, upon the extreme depravity and worthlessness of the noblest of His handiworks; but he humbly, perhaps tearfully, says and thinks that he has done wrong, and takes his punishment as bravely as he can, and promises 'not to do it again,' and intends to keep his promise with a willing spirit, though, alas! the flesh may be weak.

I may seem to despise what I have called religious sentiment, but I don't mean to say that boys never have religious thoughts or feelings. Such thoughts

and feelings a boy does have, like his elders, but they are so deep and true and holy, that he scarcely will speak them out even to his intimate friends, and, above all, shrinks from making a parade of them. It may be imagined that he does not care to make the Reverend Mr. Johnson his confidant, wherefore that gentleman dubs him a heathen. But sometimes, not often, under the tender influence of a mother's love, or the noble enthusiasm of a schoolboy friendship, his inmost heart is opened, and he speaks forth his thoughts on the holy things that are for this world, yet not of it. Vague and formless these thoughts may be, but they are real and pure.

Again I say we are too ready to judge men by their words, whereas we have been taught, and have had time enough and to spare in the life of this world of ours, to learn the truth of the saying, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' Are the fruits of boyhood's faith good or bad? And if the words of boys do not proclaim them Christians, if even their hearts do not give them confidence to claim that holy name in its highest sense, thank God that He is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.

A certain Teacher once came upon earth to teach men to be kind and true and wise and humble. Most of us profess to reverence His sayings, and, like others, I have read and tried to comprehend them. I do not find that He said in what manner of build-

ings, or at what seasons, or in what colour of garments, God was to be worshipped. Nor does He seem to have instructed His followers to make long prayers and to judge one another. Nor is there any passage extant in which He ordains that the chief members of His church are to have at least five thousand a year, and to be called 'Rabbi,' or 'My Lord,' and to sit in the uppermost seats at feasts. But I read this, that He set a little child in the midst of His chosen disciples, and bid them remember that 'of such are the kingdom of heaven.'

We should take heed, therefore, how we despise these little ones, how we frown on their smiles, how we check their gambols, how we scorn their ignorance, how we thank God that we are not as they; remembering how to all His other blessings their Father has added to them that of teachableness, how apt they are to learn if rightly taught, we should wisely, kindly, and earnestly try to teach them such parts of God's law as we see more clearly than they; and remembering, too, how Christ has praised and promised to reward their humility, we should strive and pray that our hearts may be made as modest and as simple as theirs.

Reader, do you know what put it into my head to write this chapter, which has been simmering there for weeks? One day, after school-time, I had returned to our school to fetch a book which I had

forgotten, and, in passing by one of the class-rooms, I heard the choir of the school chapel practising. I never can help stopping to listen to boys singing, and on this occasion they were singing a hymn which I have a special admiration for, so I softly opened the door and walked in. I shall insert the hymn entire, because it was written by a certain dominie, whose name is familiar to and well loved by the boys of England, and because I am afraid it is not so well known as it should be :—

'Father, before Thy throne of the light the guardian angels bend,
And ever in Thy presence bright, their psalms adoring blend ;
And casting down each golden crown beside the crystal sea,
With voice and lyre, in happy choir, hymn glory, Lord, to Thee.

'And as the rainbow lustre falls athwart their glowing wings,
While seraph unto seraph calls, and each Thy goodness sings,
So may we feel, as low we kneel to pray Thee for Thy grace,
That thou art here for all who fear the brightness of Thy face.

'Here, where the angels see us come to worship day by day,
Teach us to seek our heavenly home, and love Thee e'en as they ;
Teach us to raise our notes of praise, with them Thy love to own,
That boyhood's time and manhood's prime be Thine, and Thine alone.'

I never heard this hymn sung in boys' fresh, clear voices without pleasure, but this time my pleasure was rather spoiled by seeing that one of the choir boys, by name Harold Douglas, who is rather a favourite of mine, did not seem to be thinking of what he was singing. Harold is what I call a good boy, sometimes a little idle and thoughtless, but

always honest, obedient, and unselfish, so I was concerned to see him staring about him and giving utterance to these sweet and sacred words in a mere perfunctory manner, with his head most likely far more full of the game which was going on outside among his comrades than of the heavenly aspirations of the hymn. It gave quite a jar to my feelings, and I walked home reflecting sadly and doubtfully.

'Did Christ speak truth when He said that of such were His kingdom?' I thought, 'or is the Reverend Mr. Johnson right when he hints that only such as he himself can enter therein?'

'Are boys really to be called wicked because they don't always appreciate the orthodox means of grace; nor conform their standard of right and wrong to that of their elders?' I ran on, for my head was full of the subject, and I had heard a sermon on it from Mr. Johnson the day before. 'Are their generous and frank instincts good and heavenly, or are they but marks of reprobation and damnation, filthy rags of human righteousness, deceitful works of carnal pride? And their happy and careless hearts, their free and sparkling life, their tender sympathy with "human tears and human laughter, and the depth of human love,"—are these things the devil's work and wages, or are they not?'

Then a little voice whispered to me that every truly good and happy thought in the heart of man

was put there by God, and by none other, and that frank and innocent laughter, and healthy and natural desires, and pure and charitable thoughts, and brave and kindly deeds, are not the devil's to give. So I plucked up courage and confirmed my faith, which had been somewhat shaken by the sermon I have mentioned, and gave thanks to our Father that He does not send us into the world from heaven our home, 'in utter nakedness, and entire forgetfulness' of Himself, but is with us from our infancy, guiding, guarding, and blessing.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BOYS.

'Plus scire satius est, quam loqui.'—PLAUTUS.

SUPERFICIAL critics, and those who have not formed their judgment upon the best models, may be apt to object that my work is merely a bundle of random essays, and does not proceed by any fixed and elegant method. But they are wrong, doubly wrong; firstly, as to the necessity of such a requirement, and secondly, as to its non-fulfilment in the present instance. I maintain that a writer who breaks ground in such a new and unworked subject, has a right, if he pleases, to make his first approaches in an irregular and tentative manner; and I do not feel myself called upon to enter into competition with those precise and orderly writers who expend their force so much upon the manner of their books, that they have but little left for dealing fairly with the matter.

Yet if the critic will remember the principle, *ars est celare artem*, he will find that, waiving the question of liability, I have treated the subject with due care and precision. Indeed, with the exception of one point, I consider myself not to have fallen short of the attempt, at least, of a perfect work on boys. That one point is completeness, in which I acknowledge my deficiency. But, if a post-diluvian scholar be allowed a lifetime for the examination and exposition of Greek particles, may not the study of boys be held to demand the unceasing labour of a literary Methuselah?

I have, then, a distinct plan, which at this point seems to demand an account of the philosophy of boyhood. But I confess that I am considerably puzzled how to set about such a task. Boys have no written or legendary materials, from which to collect a harmonious and individual system that would read well in a cyclopædia. Nay, to the superficial eye, they seem to reject all such systems, to be very Philistines, Gallios, sceptics, to have no visible aspirations after 'light and sweetness,' no love whatever for wisdom, but distinctly the reverse. Who ever heard a boy discoursing *more Socratico* upon the nature of good and evil, and the relations of pleasure and pain? Does a boy ever venture to put into words his opinions upon the scheme of the universe, and the lot of humanity?

Yes, sometimes. The other day two of my boys were detained to write impositions, and among many other scraps of conversation with which they lightened the monotony of this task, I happened to be auditor of the following :—

'I say, Jack, don't you wish there was no such thing as books in the world?' said one, throwing down his pen, and giving a great yawn.

But Jack was a youth of a bolder turn of mind, having a wider range of thought, and a juster conception of the conditions necessary for the wellbeing of humanity in general, and himself in particular. So after a moment's reflection he made reply—

'I wish there was such a thing in the world as knowing everything first go.'

His companion looked at him with astonishment and admiration, struck by the boldness and originality of this idea. But in a moment he had weighed the matter, and seen the inutility of further reasoning.

'Ah, but you see there isn't,' he said, and then they both returned very contentedly to the writing of their impositions.

This conversation, albeit not couched in the ordinary terms of science, struck me as savouring extremely of the highest wisdom of the philosopher. If all wise men were only equally ready to perceive and acknowledge the weakness of their own wisdom beyond certain bounds, what an ocean of midnight

oil might have been saved, and what a mountain of learned discourses, treatises, theories, and such-like the world might have been spared!

Nothing can be more clear to me than that though boys have no digests of moral and mental science, they are deeply imbued with certain principles which enable them to bear the troubles of life with as much equanimity as possible, and, therefore, in the secondary and popular sense of the word, may justly be termed philosophy.

So far as we can analyse these principles, interpreted as they are by no teachers or text-books, there seems to preponderate in them the Epicurean or Horatian idea of enjoyment of the present, and wise indifference to the future. 'Let us laugh and play, for at nine o'clock we go into first lesson,' is the boy's maxim. There may be evils coming, but in the meanwhile he will snatch the fleeting fruit of time, and not only eat his fill, but put as much as possible in his pockets. The gods wrap their caprices in kindly night, therefore why should he bother himself overmuch about his Latin *Rep.* If they do rage, they can't sour the half-holiday yesterday; and perhaps there will be another to-morrow. Occasionally, like the old poet who expounded this system, the boy is alarmed by a thunderstorm more violent than usual, reproaches himself with being a *parcus et infrequens cultor* of the Muses, vows that he will

amend, and fully intends to do so. But let the sky once clear and the cane be locked up; his resolutions fade away, and again it is *carpe diem.*

The enervating effect of this view of life is partly counteracted by a large admixture of stoical principles. The true boy looks upon pain as a not unmixed evil, and, to a certain extent, courts it as a good. Hence the charge of cruelty and brutality brought against boys, which has its foundation partly in an actual love of, and pride in suffering and enduring. This may be seen in many of the games of boys, where the great part of the fun consists in running the risk of getting hurt, with the chance of hurting others. And it is well known to prudent and anxious mammas that boys delight in bearing cold and wet, and would at all times rather walk through a puddle or go without an overcoat than otherwise. Schoolmasters, too, have learned that it is an absolute pleasure to boys to endure floggings with Spartan fortitude, and if they are sharp-sighted enough to observe such phenomena, might even tell tales of two boys contending in generous rivalry for a whole half-year, to come in for the greater number of inflictions of this sort. I remember a boy who had a fly-blister put on his throat, and was so struck by its effects that he made use of his first day of convalescence to buy some blistering tissue, with which he amused himself by putting pieces on his arms, and

trying how long he could bear the pain. I could tell many stories of this kind; but none more touching than that of a scarcely fledged little schoolboy of my acquaintance, which I think extremely creditable to him. Having been doomed to swallow pills every day, he resolved to meet the misfortune with manly indifference, and to that end he secretly and persistently accustomed himself to swallow dried peas. So he schooled himself to take down his pills without a wry face or a murmur, though it might be a question for the scientific reader, and especially for his physician, how far the means in this process would tend to counteract the end.

All this may seem very coarse and animal, not to say heathenish. But, say what you will, you cannot persuade me that it is a despicable virtue which enables us to make any of the ills of life our friends rather than our foes; neither do self-mortification and self-conquest seem to me so unchristian as it doubtless does to certain wealthy religionists.

At all events, the result of the philosophy of the boy is that he bears his share of the ills of life with a more tranquil spirit than his elders. He gets as much good as he can out of the world, and looks as little as possible on the black side of things. He can dare to be in some degree independent of fickle fortune. He praises her remaining, but if she shake her

wings and depart, why, he wraps himself in his virtue, such as it is, and waits as patiently as may be till she see fit to return. Hence black care has some difficulty in getting up behind on the boy's pony, and can't remain long perched on his roughly carved boat.

I should like before concluding to say a word about one point on which the ethical studies or instincts of boys have undeniably led them to a wrong and lamentable conclusion. The best of them do not always recognise an obligation to tell the truth under certain circumstances. I should have mentioned this under the head of morality, but, to be candid with the reader, I foresaw that the present chapter would be too short, and resolved to drag this into it somehow or other.

Boys have become impregnated with the notion that though lying may be in some cases disgraceful, still that the systematic or occasional deception of masters is justifiable and praiseworthy, and also highly advisable, under certain circumstances, care being taken not to be found out. The origin of this error may be seen from the following passage in *Tom Brown's School Days*:—

'What one has always felt about the masters is,' says Harry East, 'that it's a fair trial of skill and

last between them and us, like a match at football or a battle. We're natural enemies in school, that's the fact. We've got to learn so much Latin and Greek, and do so many verses, and they've got to see that we do it. If we can slip the collar and do so much less without getting caught, that's one to us. If they can get more out of us, or catch us shirking, that's one to them. All's fair in war, but lying. . . . It's all clear and fair, no mistake about it. We understand it, and they understand it, and there's no mistake about it.'

This is a very fair exposition of the boyish creed. Still there is a glaring contradiction in it, concerning which I would venture to expostulate with the leaders of juvenile thought. The assertion of the unfairness of lying is made, and yet it is incontestable that boys of Harry East's stamp daily and unblushingly resort to cribbing, copying of exercises, vicarious performance of impositions and so forth, and cannot understand why any moral indignation should be aroused by these practices. I can only imagine that they found their dogma upon some such syllogism as this—

'Lying is wrong; all lying is not lying: therefore all lying is not wrong.'

It must be evident to the logician that there are here both an undue assumption of a premise and also an irrelevant conclusion. Lying must be defined as

any and every attempt to deceive. If you copy an exercise and show it up as one written by yourself, or if you crib a construe, and pretend that it is the result of your own labour, is that not lying?

'But,' says the exponent of juvenile ethics, 'we don't pretend anything. We show up the exercise or the construe, and leave the master to find out how we came by them.' 'But what if the master tells you, as many do, that he trusts to your honour not to crib? Are you afterwards careful to advertise him whenever your work may be done dishonestly?' Whereupon my interlocutor is dumb, only muttering something about 'It's being very hard on a fellow, especially if he's in the first eleven, and has to practise.'

Some schoolmasters have found this kind of deception so strongly rooted that they have given way before it, and do not attempt to prohibit their boys from making use of cribs, though they know this to be a most slovenly and pernicious way of getting over difficulties. I have a great contempt for this cowardice. Boys *can* be got to learn their lessons honourably and diligently; indeed, I think most will do so, if they are left to themselves and are not corrupted by the tacit acquiescence of masters or the evil influence of one of our great model schools. In the school where I am now a master I am certain that cribbing does not obtain in any degree, and,

when I was a boy myself, though I have little else to be proud of in my boyhood, I don't remember ever to have touched a crib, except once, by desire of my tutor, and then I took it up with a pair of tongs, as a sign of my abhorrence and suspicion of such occult agencies.

I am glad to say, however, that this false doctrine of the justifiability of deceiving masters is dying out in our schools, as the masters come more and more to sympathize with, and therefore to influence their boys, and as the boys learn more clearly that even these Samaritans are their neighbours, and are to be treated with as much kindness and candour as they show to each other.

Let us hope for the day when there will reign no master but will be ashamed to be cruel or unreasonable to a boy, and when every boy will scorn to save himself from trouble or punishment by even the shadow of an untruth; but that day will never come if we sit still and mourn over the depravity of human nature.

Thus much concerning the philosophy of boys, which I trust that Professor Teufelsdröckh, the friend of boys (as being the enemy of windbags, flunkeydoms, tailorisms, in fact of humbug generally), would approve of. For from this philosophy, 'Axioms, Categories, Systems, Aphorisms,' are, rightly or wrongly, absent, as also 'High Air-castles cunningly

built of Words, the Words well bedded also in good Logic mortar.' A somewhat voiceless philosophy, doubtless, yet not altogether so 'inexpressibly unproductive' as systems more widely vaunted and more fiercely controverted.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MANNERS OF BOYS; WITH SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE GRUNDY FAMILY.

'He called them untaught knaves, unmannerly.'—SHAKESPEARE.

'THE manners of boys!' I hear my readers cry scornfully. 'As well talk of the breeches of a Highlander, the dress-coat of a Hottentot, the humanity of a garrotter, the conscience of a railway director, the free press of a republic, the consistency of a Conservative, the logic of a Fenian, the talent and morality of a fashionable novel, the charity and large-mindedness of the "Christian Chronicle" newspaper, the coat of arms of a costermonger, the cunning of a dove, the harmlessness of a serpent, the learning of a ranter, the apostolic simplicity of a bishop, the modesty of a schoolmaster,—in fact, anything most strange, improbable, and proverbial,—as of the manners of boys.'

'The manners of boys!' resound the chorus of genteel mammas and sisters and cousins. 'What an idea! Do not boys come into our drawing-rooms with muddy boots? do not they yawn at our tea-parties? do not they wink at each other while Signora Squallini is singing, or Herr Thumpitino is playing—oh! so beautifully! Do not they whistle in the passage, and slide down the bannisters, and make coarse remarks on our chignons, as in days of yore on our crinolines? Do not they scorn gloves, dirty their collars, tear their jackets, show indifference to the true doctrine of the relative use of knives and forks, and do many other things which well-conducted young gentlemen ought not to do—not to speak of leaving undone things which they ought to do, such as brushing their hair, learning to dance, cultivating the art of polite conversation about nothing, and so forth!'

True, mesdames; but consider, if you were for once in a way turned into the society of Cherokees or Chinamen, might you not omit to eat with your fingers, or to rub your head on the ground at the approach of a stranger, or fail to see the necessity of arranging your pigtail in a graceful knot, after the fashion set by the sister of the Sun and Moon, or of painting your cheeks blue and yellow, *à la squaw impératrice*, or otherwise; and would you not feel it unjust that you should be severely blamed for these

solecisms in etiquette? And yet the poor boy whom you are so unanimously indignant against is perhaps as little at home at your parties as you would be in the wigwam or tent of good *ton*. Your customs are to him as unmeaning and as ridiculous; and in his heart of hearts he despises your pleasures and pursuits almost as much as you look down upon those of the American and Asiatic ladies and gentlemen.

The boy has manners of his own. He may not fully recognise the eternal verities which prohibit man from eating peas with a knife, or from shaking hands with a person to whom he is introduced for the first time; but in his way, and to a certain degree, he can be courteous to his companions, and fulfil the requirements of the stringent code of etiquette which obtains among his equals; and besides, is fully versed in the ceremonies which he thinks right to observe towards those acknowledged by him as his superiors. Show me the boy who does not give to his companion a share of any sweets he may buy, and I will tell you that he will be considered, in the best circles of boys, as ill-bred as the man would be who might help some one else to the leg of a fowl and keep the breast for himself. Show me the boy who would be really rude to a lady—I don't include laughing at her chignon, for a boy laughs at that as he laughs at a monkey's tail, because it is so funny, and he can't

help it—who would not do any service for a woman in distress—I mean a woman in a good dress, whom alone he has been taught by his parents to look upon as an object for chivalrous assistance—and I can assure you his conduct would be as severely reprobated among boys as you would wish. Show me a boy who would be impertinent to his teacher—that is, always supposing that the said teacher is on a proper footing of authority, and gets at least five pounds a year more wages than the butler—show me such a boy—and he won't do it a second time, if it is the present writer he has to deal with.

Those who have much to do with boys, and those only, perhaps, can see how much unsuspected courtesy there is hid beneath the apparent roughness of their manners, and also how much more might be developed in them by judicious training. We ought to do our best to develop it, to teach our pupils God's law ordering us all to be kind and considerate to every one of our fellow-creatures. But I, for one, will never consent to inculcate upon them the precepts of Mrs. Grundy, or to attempt to put her yoke on their free necks. That potentate bears sway in the grown-up world, but let us hope that youthful Britons never will be her slaves. As yet they have not learned to smirk and smile and lie, calling it all 'the customs of polite society.' They are honest in speak-

ing their thoughts, in choosing their friends, in reviling their foes. They do not judge each other by adventitious standards. There are different ranks and sets, indeed, in every class of boys, which keep aloof from each other in a proper spirit of exclusiveness; but a boy's place in the scale of society is at least determined by merits which he can call his own, and not his great-grandfather's. If the fellow who has most money or the best cricket-bat is a fool, nobody will hesitate to tell him so. If his ancestor, some dozen generations back, was the illegitimate son of the most rakish monarch that ever disgraced a nation, that wouldn't save him from the due consequences of being a sneak or a bully. The whole system of juvenile aristocracy would indeed delight Mr. Carlyle. The king of boys, the leader, the revered, the fountain of honour, is not the best dressed and most empty-headed among them, but the one who *can*, who has won his sceptre on the battle-ground, the cricket-field, or the examination-paper; and his nobles and knights are his admirers and imitators, each striving to outdo the other in deeds of prowess and renown.

Yet stay—though Mrs. Grundy dares not set her foot on the school playground, I must confess that there is a suckling deity of a kindred nature, who bears rule among boys. Let us call her Miss Grundy. I grieve to have to write the word; but at least there

is consolation in this, that her rule is not so tyrannous and unreasonable as that of her despotic parent.

Boys have a great awe of public opinion among themselves: and it is their respect for what Tom, Dick, and Harry will say and think, that I personify under this appellation. Her decrees, as I say, are not so many nor so oppressive as her mother's, but they are bad enough. For instance, in one school she ordains that no boy shall carry his books in a satchel, under pain of being considered vulgar and muffish. In another, she allows sweetmeats to be eaten in any form save in that of *rock*, which is accordingly tabooed among all boys of any pretensions to *savoir-vivre*, and only consumed in secret by small urchins, whose incomes do not allow them to make a satisfactory investment in toffee. In a third, she enacts that it shall be considered low, disreputable, and altogether unworthy of a gentleman to play at marbles, and even, in some instances, that any boy so far forgetting himself, shall be cut by the whole body of his school-fellows.

This is all I can find at present to say about the manners of boys, or the extent to which custom and prejudice obtain among them, which comes to much the same thing. As the advocate of boyhood, I have done my best to prove that my clients have exceedingly good manners. But on reflection, I think that their cause may be best served by candour, and I

feel it no less my duty to my readers to extenuate nothing, than to set down naught in malice. So, while assuring them that I have spoken my mind truly on the subject, I would call their attention to the significant fact that this is the shortest chapter in the book.

CHAPTER IX.

PECULIAR BOYS.

'Sua cuique quum sit animi cogitatio,
Colorque privus.'—PHÆDRUS.

BEGIN this chapter in fear and trembling. I wish to paint to my readers some peculiarities of boys with whom I have to do, and that in the plainest colours. I feel that thus I am about to lay myself open to wrath and censure. I have no scruple about attacking the faults and weaknesses of my professional brethren; I can listen with comparative indifference to the shout of '*Foenum habet in cornu; longe fuge*' which they may raise against me. For they can defend themselves; they can take paper and ink likewise, and make caps which I may be able to fit on my own head. But women and children!—shall I make my bread by crushing the bones of these innocent babes who are committed to my charge,

and maddening mammas against the calumniator of their darlings! Shall I not run a risk of slaying the goose that lays my eggs, such as they are? Shall I not damage my professional prospects? Will tender parents send their children to me, a cruel ogre who takes notes of their habits and dispositions, and suborns a diabolic inky juvenile, unconscious traitor against his species, to convey them to the press? No matter: in such an undertaking as mine there is scanty room for these scruples. I have engaged to write the truth, and the truth cannot be written in rose-water. All other interests must shrink into naught, compared with the great duty of enlightening the public about boys.

Every schoolmaster must have had to do with peculiar boys, who perhaps don't know how much notice is taken of their peculiarities by us dominies, and how many themes for controversy and speculation they afford to such of us as aspire to be subtle students of human nature.

For instance, I wonder what Simpson would say if he knew how much wonder and amusement he has caused myself and my colleagues. Simpson is at present the show boy of my class. With his high, broad forehead, his intelligent countenance, his finely cut features, he is just the sort of boy whom ladies visiting our class-room are sure to take notice of. 'Who is that aristocratic-looking boy?' they ask me.

Indeed, he looks like a young lord, and is proud and sensitive as I hope few young lords are. He will only associate with a select few of the boys, and looks down upon the rest, who, however, look down upon him in return, for with them outward appearance does not go far. He lolls back on the form with the true air of high-born *hauteur*, and grows crimson if I desire him to sit up straight. He seems to condescend to say his lesson to me, and if I propose to punish him, looks so indignant that it is a wonder I have the courage to go on with the operation. But for all that he is one of the idlest, most useless fellows in the class. His refined looks are a delusion and a snare. But he can't help his appearance, poor fellow. I don't believe that there is the least affectation about him; all his airs and graces seem perfectly natural to him. His father is a retired pork-butcher.

I don't much like Simpson, but still less do I like Marsh. He is a tallow-faced, sulky, unhealthy-looking animal. He is a peculiar boy in this respect, that he shows spite towards me. If I have to punish him, instead of taking it as decorously and forgetting it as quickly as may be, he snivels and snarls, and for days afterwards, by ugly looks, and short, sullen answers, does all he can to show me that he is deeply offended with me. Of course I don't show him that I am affected by this resentment, but I do feel it very deeply. It makes me miserable to think that I am

hated even by a bad boy; so I find it hard and disagreeable to do my duty properly towards Master Marsh. Luckily there is some prospect of my being speedily delivered from him. I hear that he is conducting a domestic agitation for reform in the length of his coat-tails and the shape of his collars, imagining himself to have arrived at a mature age for such increase of dignity. If he gains this point, I have no doubt he will next demand that he be taken away from school and sent to 'private classes,' where he will be a 'young gentleman,' and have leisure to attend to the fit of his gloves, the arrangement of his necktie, and the other most important interests of a young gentleman's life.

He is cowardly and greedy. The only thing his name will be memorable for among his contemporaries is his great trial of gluttony with Billy Throgmorton. It took place one Saturday forenoon in a confectioner's shop near our school, the funds being the result of consanguineous benefactions received by both parties during the Christmas holidays, which had just passed. The two little gluttons ate on against each other for nearly half-an-hour, and were of course ill for a week after. I rather think Marsh won, by two puffs and a pennyworth of gingerbread.

Marsh is no more a favourite with his companions than with me. He excels among them at nothing but quarrelling, and even that he does in a parti-

cularly nasty and offensive way. *Palus inamabilis*, or, in English, 'that beast Marsh' is the name given him by Benson, our licensed jester.

This Benson is rather a peculiar character. He is not by any means a distinguished scholar, but he is without doubt a clever boy. To this day, I don't believe he knows the accusative plural neuter of *duo*, which has long been a subject of contention between us; but set him among a group of his companions in play-time, and he will keep them in roars of laughter by his sallies. I am told that the way in which he imitates my walk and gestures behind my back is something well worth seeing. He is the author of half the nicknames in the school, and exceedingly clever some of them are. But his character is composed of two extremes. I have noticed that whenever he has been more mad and merry than usual, there comes a reaction, and for days he will be silent, morose, and unhappy-looking. At such times he shuns all companionship; but generally he is hand in glove with every boy in the class, the worst and the best. He can't fight or run or play football, but I notice that most of the boys seem to treat him with a certain amount of deference. I think they are afraid of his tongue.

Benson's great butt is Foster, who is, without exception, the stupidest boy I knew. 'Socrates,' Benson calls him, and the irony is indeed bitter. A good-

hearted, harmless creature enough, but absolutely on a level with a decent door-post as regards intelligence. Hopelessly he has sat at the bottom of my class for four years; hopelessly he will sit there for two years longer, by which time haply he may come to have a glimmering of the abstract truth, that an adjective ought to agree with its substantive. With lack-lustre eye he stares at his book, now and then looking up to me with his patient, cowlike face, in which I can see some slight shade of agitation, betokening that the pulp which serves him as an intellect is vainly endeavouring to struggle through the mists of my explanation. Sometimes I jocularly repeat to him the ironical lines—

> 'And still the wonder grew
> That one small head could carry all he knew.'

But Foster listens with such a trustful and unsuspicious smile, that my heart is quite touched, and I feel how cruel it is to chaff him.

The legend goes that Foster never read a book through in his life, except the Catechism. But once, it is said, he made a desperate resolve to become acquainted with English literature, and to that end began to read the story of 'The Coral Island.' Of this he got through a chapter every evening, putting in a mark to show him where he had left off. But some naughty little boys who boarded in the same house, observing this expedient of his, took care to

get hold of the book each day when he had finished, and to return the mark to the place where it had been before. Next time, Foster would innocently commence again without detecting the trick that had been played, and this went on till at length he gave up the book in despair, no doubt disgusted by the monotony of its style and incidents.

Foster gives me little enough trouble, however, if I only leave him to chew the cud of vacuity in peace. I wish I could say the same thing of Throgmorton. This young gentleman is '*impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer.*' Always full of tricks, in season and out of season, jumping, winking, grinning, poking pins into the boy sitting next him, twisting himself into horrible contortions, fidgeting, kicking his heels, in every possible way making himself a nuisance—no wonder that I look upon him as one of the plagues of life! He is at the bottom of half the misdeeds that the other boys commit, and he has an unreasonable share of scrapes to his own credit. So far, well; I rather enjoy managing tricky boys, if they are brave and honest. Such boys I can regard with

> 'The stern joy that warriors feel
> In foemen worthy of their steel.'

But the peculiarity of Billy Throgmorton is, that with all his love of fun and mischief, he is one of the arrantest cowards you can imagine. He is ready

enough to play tricks, but when it comes to the question of paying the due penalty, Master Billy draws in his horns with wonderful celerity. To see him in his intervals of impunity, you would think him one of the most daring rebels, but the moment that the fatal key turns in the lock of the sacred drawer, his spirits go down to zero, and he blubbers like a baby. Then, when the infliction is over, he repents most copiously, and makes edifying vows of amendment; but in five minutes his little black eyes are sparkling with as much wickedness as ever. In fact, he is a thorough humbug.

Billy, as you may suppose, is not thought much of by his companions. An excellent rebuke was administered to him by one of them the other day. One of my colleagues had caught him at some of his usual pranks, and was proposing to punish him. Billy wept and entreated, and made such a work that both the class and the master were thoroughly disgusted, and the latter took the opportunity of improving the occasion, pointing out what a fool this fellow was, who wasted their time by his silly antics, but made such an outcry over the due consequences thereof. And then another boy, a decent, quiet fellow, who seldom gave any trouble, stepped forward and volunteered to take the thrashing for him. The master gave it to him, not very severely I suppose, and then turned upon Billy and addressed him in

wingèd words. It was a grand chance for the advocate of law and order; the good boy taking the punishment voluntarily on himself, and the naughty one behaving like a baby. My friend made the most of it, and the boys were profoundly impressed, and gave vent to their righteous indignation by hissing Billy as soon as they got out of school. He, for his part, was as much ashamed of himself as it is possible for such an animal to be, and was comparatively sobered down for a day or two.

I can't understand the boy; he is such an odd mixture of recklessness and cowardice. I suspect he presumes upon my well-known propensity for the humorous, and up to the moment of execution hopes to soften my heart by his impudence. He once played upon me the most impertinent trick I ever knew. I had given him a hundred lines to write, and when I called on him to produce them, he gravely marched up to my desk, and laid down ten sealed envelopes upon it one by one. Each envelope was addressed to me in full, and contained ten lines scrawled over a whole sheet of note paper. He did not make much by this, for I gave him back his envelopes, and desired him to bring me the imposition next day, written upon a single piece of paper. This made him look rather disgusted for a few minutes, but he was so quiet all the rest of the morning that I suspected he was planning some new piece of imper-

tinence. And, indeed, when he went home, he cut the edges off a newspaper, pasted them into one long strip, on which he wrote the lines, and then wound it round a clothes-pin. Next morning, when I asked him for it, he pulled the clothes-pin out of his great-coat pocket, and began to unroll the voluminous work amid roars of laughter. 'You told me I was to write it all on one piece of paper, sir,' he remarked in a tone of remonstrance, as he caught my eye fixed upon him with no twinkle of appreciation in it. It was not to be borne; I thrashed Billy well, much to his amazement and disgust, and kept him in school to write the imposition properly. He did it this time, and added at the end, for my benefit, 'I beg your pardon, sir, and I am going to try and mend my ways from this day.' I knew very well that he was going to do nothing of the sort; but I wish he would, for his ways are anything but ways of pleasantness.

I once had a brother of his under my charge, who was a very different character. James Throgmorton, though he never distinguished himself much in school, was one of the most preternaturally wise boys I ever saw. At nine years old he would give you his opinion about any subject as gravely as a grown man. At ten, I remember his studying the evidence given at a celebrated criminal trial which was then exciting breathless interest throughout the country, and his

informing me, that in his opinion, the verdict of the jury was wrong. He had no doubt, he said, that the prisoner was guilty, but he thought that the evidence failed to prove him so. He used to read the newspapers regularly before breakfast. 'What do you think of this expedition?' he said once at the time of the Russian war. 'They seem to be sending out too many men. Now, I think a fleet in the Black Sea and some ten thousand troops behind the Danube will be quite enough.' Long before he knew the irregular comparisons in the Latin Grammar, he studied astronomy and chemistry of his own accord. He used to cause me great amusement at the school library, of which I had then the charge. I would take down book after book for him, which he would reject with scorn and disdain till I hit upon a sufficiently large and dingy-looking volume. To have pictures or gay binding was fatal to the character of any work in his eyes, but he would carry off one which looked learned enough on the outside, without even opening it. I shall never forget the disgusted yet forgiving look which he gave me, when I offered him 'The Arabian Nights.'

Poor James, his wisdom oozed out as he grew older. I suspect he pumped his mind dry before he could make any use of it. Every year he got lower down in his class, till at length he had to leave school and go to a Scotch university. He is now a very decent

country doctor, and I hope his practice is not so good that he can afford to buy this book (for, of course, every one who can will buy it); or he may be vexed at me for raking up bygones of which he is, I daresay, thoroughly ashamed by this time.

Streatham, *alias* 'The Polar Bear,' a name bestowed upon him by Benson, in compliment to his almost white hair, is a curious boy in one respect. He is lame from his birth, and so, according to the laws laid down by writers of fiction for the guidance of nature, he ought to be very pious, pale, and patient, with a slight touch of melancholy in his character, and an inclination towards an early grave. But the fact is, that he is exceedingly jovial, ruddy, and mischievous—indeed, he sometimes aspires to rival Billy Throgmorton in his performances as clown of the class. His arms are as muscular as his legs are weak, and he makes use of his crutch as an instrument of offence and defence, poking all the boys round him with it when my back is turned, and every now and then triumphantly flourishing it behind me. Besides, he is a dead shot with a watch-spring gun, and a very poor hand at Virgil; so that both I and his classmates have frequent occasion to be wroth with him. But he laughs at us, secure in the strength of his infirmity, which indeed often stands him in good stead. He knows as well as we do that public opinion won't allow us to be hard on a poor cripple. I only wish

public opinion could have had as much trouble with him as I have had.

Perhaps the queerest boy I ever had to deal with was Robert Hopkins. Robert was a good sort of fellow in his way, but he was a poet, of the subjective and saturnine order. His heart had been soured early in life by a crushing disappointment. He had been attached to a cousin, rather more than twice his own age, who had married and gone to India with a fiend, in the shape of a captain of Hussars. The poor boy's only consolation was to pour forth the records of his blighted affection in mournful verse, of which I am able to present the reader with some specimens. He used to look them over when he should have been doing his exercise, so I confiscated them, much to his disgust. The first of the series, which begins, 'O Caroline, O heart once mine,' is truly affecting. He describes his misfortune in this simple and striking imagery—

> 'Her heart was pledged, my hopes were fledged,
> And in their nest began to sing;
> But 'ere they grew, away they flew
> Upon a sad and speedy wing.'

He then compares the general prosperity of nature with his own sad state—

> 'The oak is stronger, its shadow longer,
> Its leaves are larger than before;
> My heart is blighted, my soul benighted,
> To see the light on earth no more.'

He exhibits Tennysonian bitterness against rank and wealth, for the captain's pay seemed boundless riches to a young gentleman on sixpence a week:—

'Her heart was sold, not for love but gold,
And ah! the price seemed far too small.
Blot out my name! Another came
And won her hand at the country ball.'

The next poem exhibits traces of a more profound and passionless despair. It begins—

'And hast thou left me, to return
No more, no more again?
My thoughts swim about like thy Raven Hair,
Upon a Sea of pain.'

The sea now enters largely into his verses, for they were written in the holidays at a bathing-place. Presently he is apostrophizing her by its sorrowfully-sounding shore:—

'Alone, alone, I wander
By the mighty ocean's shore:
Oh, cruel waves which bore her off,
Oh, bear her back once more!'

But she comes not; so, like Mr. Toots', his thoughts turn in a sepulchral direction:—

'Oh heart, great tomb of Young Affection,
Be henceforth icy, loveless stone!
Oh Hope! oh Joy! oh Peace be absent!
And leave me with my grief—alone!'

Poor Hopkins! He was a flabby, fat, good-natured-looking fellow; and if you saw the cheerful way in which he waddled about in a game of hockey, you

would scarcely have guessed what a fearful sorrow was gnawing in his breast. Though his own heart was so cruelly blighted, he always had a smile for his fellow-creatures, and used to allow himself to be bullied and kicked about with patient resignation. The only thing that seemed to make him angry was when he was called 'Fat Bob,' a piece of shallow wit which vexed his poetic soul. He and I always got on well enough; the only matter on which, to the best of my remembrance, we ever had serious differences, being a reprehensible habit of eating peppermint drops in school, that his mental agony had no doubt driven him to.

It may seem rather hard on me to publish these secret utterances of his heart, but I may state that I have received his full permission to do so. For he still lives, and writes what is better worth reading; and no one can laugh more heartily than he does over his juvenile effusions. We are on rather intimate terms; and now that I understand him better than I did when he was a boy, I know that his heart was not much affected, but only his mind a little turned by a precocious admiration for Tennyson and Edgar Allen Poe. When he went to college he took a course of Kingsley and other tonics, which strengthened his imagination wonderfully; and now his mature works are quite of a jovial and robust type.

They say that the child is father to the man, but I have known many cases of men whose character was very different from that of their boyhood. Hopkins is one, and Hart, a present pupil of mine, will be another. The stricken Hart, as I call him, is one of the most timid, shrinking boys I ever saw. He only came to me about six months ago, and till then he had been under some savage, cruel, idiotical brute of a schoolmaster, who had roared and thrashed all spirit out of his gentle nature. He used to start when I spoke to him, and tremble if I came near him; but as he finds that a schoolmaster is not necessarily an ogre, he is beginning to get a little confidence. Poor child! he requires a good deal of sun; but in time I have no doubt that he will put out his leaves, and imbibe the sweet dew of Latin rules and propositions of Euclid. In spite of his timidity, he is a great favourite with the other boys, so there must be good in him. I am sure it will be my fault if he grows up a coward or a blockhead.

George Harris is rather a strange boy. He is much more like a girl than a boy, with his slim form and his pink and white face. His companions tease him dreadfully, and call him Araminta Isabella. He certainly is rather sensitive and affected, and has finnikin ways about him which are not at all boy-like, but he is a good fellow at heart, brave and chivalrous, and not a bit of a muff. He would do

for one of Mr. Farrar's stories; he is just the gentlemanly, intelligent sort of boy that author delights in. Yet, when I think of it, he rather ill-treats his *h's* in a way which would be very unbecoming to any of Mr. Farrar's heroes. But though he has so many good points, I fear for his future—there are weaknesses in his character which may prove dangerous to him. I am very much afraid that at the age of fifteen he will turn out a confirmed young gentleman, and later in life I have strong suspicions that he may become a parson of the effeminate order so much in fashion now-a-days, with a profound reverence and respect for his bishop (if his lordship happens to be a High Churchman), and strong views upon the doctrine of copes and chasubles. In the meantime I find him a very pleasant and satisfactory pupil; and he looks up to me with great faith and affection, as becomes his trustful nature.

I wish I could say the same thing of Charles Martin. This is a boy whom I like, but he doesn't like me. I like him because he is brave and kind and steady and sensible and industrious; and I would give a great deal if he would return my affection in some degree, however small. But Charles has a hard, prejudiced twist in his mind, which forbids him to believe in the reality of my good-will towards him. It has got into his head that all masters, however just and patient, are the natural

enemies of boys, and no efforts of mine can get this idea out, or persuade him that I wish to be his friend. He considers my professions as so much sentiment and clap-trap; and so, though always civil and obedient, he is reserved and sedate before me in a way which says, as clearly as words can, that he thinks me a humbug. Our relations are thus very peculiar and unsatisfactory. I feel his distrust very keenly, knowing that from him at least I deserve better; but there is no help for it. We dominies must make up our minds to be misunderstood and misjudged. I can only hope that some day he will understand me better, and grant that love to my memory which he refused to me when I sought it. I do hope so; nay, I even hope—for he will be the most distinguished of my pupils—that when I am dead and buried, and my life and correspondence is published, as of course it will be, in six or more volumes, the work will be edited 'by his old pupil, Dean Martin, pastor of St. Spurgeon's Tabernacle (Free Reformed Primitive Methodist connection); Professor of Modern English at the University of ——; Author of "The Decline and Fall of Classical Learning;" "On the Teaching of Compound Hydroneumathenics in Elementary Schools;" "A Ten Days' Trip to South Africa;" "Meditations suggested by a Balloon Journey," etc. etc. etc.'

CHAPTER X.

'OI TYPANNOI

AS THEY ARE AND AS THEY SHOULD BE.

'Here is the glass for the pedagogues, preceptors, tutors, governors, gerund-grinders, and bear-leaders to view themselves in in their true dimensions.'—STERNE.

USE the expression *tyrants* in the old Greek sense, though perhaps the tyrants of our boys may too often be called so in the modern sense as well. The subject has already been treated in my former work on Dominies; yet as that book was confessedly written in praise of the profession, I did not feel so much at liberty to speak my mind as now when I am writing wholly in the service and interest of boys. Besides, as half my book on Dominies was devoted to boys in relation to schoolmasters, it is only fair that part of this be taken up in considering schoolmasters in relation to boys. These two subjects are of course very closely interwoven, and not in two books, nor even

perhaps in twenty, could one exhaust all that is to be said about them, if one could only say it, and the patient public would listen.

I exclude parents and relatives from the category of rulers of boys. My professional prejudices forbid me to admit them as regular practitioners. It is a maxim received among dominies that parents are no more fit to rule their sons than philosophers of the gushing school are to rule England. Their political economy is all sentiment. They refuse to believe that their pets can do wrong; they uphold darling Johnny's goodness of heart, and darling Bobby's honesty, with a pertinacity which astonishes the unprejudiced observer of these young gentlemen's conduct. And even if they are obliged by the stern logic of facts to recognise that darling Johnny and darling Bobby are not all that they ought to be, they find comfortable phrases with which to palliate the harsh disclosures, and save their beloved ones from the consequences which ought to attend all deviation from the right path. Darling Johnny, when ill-tempered and selfish, is declared to have a 'peculiar disposition,' and it is discovered that severity does not answer with darling Bobby, if, haply, he is discovered stealing the sugar. An affectionate parent once informed me, with regard to a new pupil, that I must not be surprised to find that his boy had 'a strong imagination.' This I very soon discovered to

be a paternal and euphemistic way of putting the unpleasant fact that the boy was the most inveterate liar I ever met with. There is no straw of sentiment so small that consanguineous affection will not seize hold of it to escape the unpleasant though sometimes necessary duty of dragging the child out of the way in which he should not go. An old lady of my acquaintance occasionally speaks to me in great tribulation about a grandson of hers, who is indisputably addicted to lying and other disagreeable peculiarities of disposition. 'But I don't like to punish him,' she says, 'because his mother's dead, and his father's far away at sea.' So in right of his dead mother and his nautical father, my young friend is probably growing up to be a curse to himself and to society.

This is the way in which these ignorant people trifle with the education of their boys. And we dominies, even we, who think so much of ourselves, and who see with such clear eyes the faults of other people's children, and are so prompt to apply the proper remedies, we must confess that when we come to deal with our own offspring, we are as much in the dark, as much liable to human error, as our lay fellow-creatures. Who ever heard of a schoolmaster that could think of and deal with his own son just as he thought of and dealt with the sons of others? This miracle of impartiality has never fallen within my experience at least. Either the master will be

too indulgent towards his own boy, or in his anxiety to avoid this extreme, he will fly to the other, and be too savage:

'Incidit in Scyllam qui vult vitare Charybdim.'

I have seen a schoolmaster who would have snubbed in a most ferocious manner any rash pupil that dared for a moment be familiar with him. I have seen such a man disgusting a whole company by encouraging his own brats to give utterance to precocious impertinences. And I have known another schoolmaster genial and kindly to all his other pupils, but stern, reserved, and almost cruel to one of them who had the misfortune to be his own son.

We think it irregular and improper for a father to educate his own son, just as a medical man would be shocked if a layman, however intelligent, were to prescribe for himself a dose of julep without taking professional advice. And as few doctors will undertake their own cases, but employ a brother Esculapius when they fall sick, so most wise teachers prefer to have their sons educated by another member of the craft, who will bring to the work an unimpassioned professional judgment, and not be likely to mar it by prejudice or sentiment.

So much must be said to justify my assertion that schoolmasters are the only fit and legitimate rulers of boys; and now to comment upon the manner in which they do their ruling.

After the lucid way in which I laid down and illustrated the subject in my former book, it may scarcely be necessary for me to repeat that the work of a schoolmaster is a great one, and that he is a great man among his boys. They look up to him as a superior being. They love or hate him, as the case may be, but if he is not a fool, they respect him. They quote his sayings, they watch his doings with as much interest as their mammas and sisters read the 'Court Circular.' Mrs. John Bull and her daughters do not derive more satisfaction and instruction from reading that 'the Princess Helena walked on the Slopes this morning' than Master John Bull does from hearing that 'Mr. Goggles read a newspaper as he was walking to school to-day,' and perhaps 'he was nearly run over by a butcher's cart as he was crossing the road.' This last piece of intelligence would be as exciting as an announcement that the Prince-Royal of Pumpanditchvater had tumbled off his hobby-horse and bruised his royal pericranium. The other day a youthful Jenkins made himself a person of importance by spying on my movements, and publishing to his compeers that at such and such a place Mr. So-and-so had smoked a pipe! So we have all the disadvantages as well as the privileges of royalty.

But, though we are thus exalted, it is a notorious fact that our office is one which goes a-begging. Broken-

down tradesmen, briefless barristers, and notoriously, parsons out of work, have to be taken in to swell our ranks, and make up a truly ragged regiment. Most men who take to teaching have generally no other wish than to get out of it as soon as possible, so it may be imagined how much their hearts are in the work. It is rare to see a man studying the management and instruction of boys with the zeal and diligence with which men study other professions, and throwing himself into it for life, heart, soul, and body. Therefore it is no wonder that our boys are not so well ruled as their fidelity and obedience deserve.

But don't let the reader suppose that I am advocating the manner in which certain wiseacres would raise our professional standard. They search the uttermost parts of the earth to find learned doctors, second Daniels, dons of Oxford and Cambridge, honour-men, intellectual mummies of the first class, and these they set to teach our boys, chuckling to themselves over the idea that they have done a good thing. The British parent highly approves of this, and hands over his offspring, with double confidence, to the care of a man who has half a dozen letters after his name. But, bless you! that's no improvement. A Doctor of Civil Law may be as arrant a fool as a village pupil-teacher, and a local preacher who drops his *h's* and doesn't know a word of the Greek Testament may be as fit to teach boys as a

senior wrangler. You don't want a genius to teach boys. The teacher must, of course, know more than the taught, but he doesn't need to know everything. He does need to have earnestness, and force of character, and knowledge of human nature, and common sense, all subjects in which no university that I know of professes to grant degrees.

But I have gone over this ground before, and I have no business to be beating it up again just now, seeing that it is not altogether necessary for my present subject. I only wish the public to understand that though our profession is worthy of their very highest respect, still many of the members of it are not worthy of their profession.

After all, it is the personal character, and not the acquirements and capabilities of their rulers, in which boys are most interested, so I will at once proceed to place the matter in this light before my readers. I may mention that, so far as I can see ahead, I don't think I shall be able to find any excuse for deviation till the end of the chapter, which assurance may, I hope, be an encouragement and satisfaction to those who are offended by the rambling style of my discourses.

Goldsmith, or rather Dr. Johnson writing in Goldsmith's name, has thought fit to observe—

> 'Of all the ills that human hearts endure,
> How small the part that kings or laws can cure!'

This may be true of men, but it is equally true that a considerable part of a boy's happiness depends on the discipline of his school and the character of his schoolmaster.

The first question a boy asks about a new master is, 'What sort of fellow is he?' The proper answer is, 'An awful beast,' or, 'A brick,' as the case may be. And the point at issue in this inquiry is, whether the scholastic individual referred to is severe and forbidding, or genial and good-tempered. Let us, for the sake of definiteness, call the two classes of schoolmasters the grave and the gay, though these words do not exactly bring out their different peculiarities. The epithets which boys themselves would use, such as 'cruel' and 'kind,'[1] are not just; for the dominie who seems cruel may be in the highest and truest sense kind, while he whom his pupils think kind, during the time of their pupilage, may turn out to have acted anything but kindly towards them in the long-run.

It is an undoubted fact that these two orders of schoolmasters exist, and have always existed; and historical evidence goes to prove that the first type, the grave, has been the prevalent one. Till the days of Arnold we seldom read of a master but as a hard and austere man, to be feared by his pupils while

[1] I have used these two English words, translated from the boy language, which might not be 'understanded of the people.'

boys, and to be ridiculed by them when they became men. Scholastic discipline is represented as a deadly war between teacher and taught, in which the teacher generally has much the best of it, and the scholar must obey in hate and trembling. What says Horace, when he wishes a comparison for a sycophant who is fearfully and nervously anxious to please his patrons?—

> 'Ut puerum saevo credas dictata magistro
> Reddere.'

But, on the other hand, there is a rising school of masters who try to make the road to knowledge as pleasant as possible—to gild the bitter pill of instruction; and we learn from Horace, also, that such dominies did exist in his day, though it is to be inferred they were looked upon as an abnormal sect by the regular practitioners and the public generally.

> '—— Pueris olim dant crustula blandi
> Doctores, elementa velint ut discere prima.'

The grave master, which was the orthodox type till lately, is a being the very antipodes of boyhood in thought, feeling, and action. He is supposed to have no pleasures but the study of preternaturally big books, no interest in anything less exalted than Latin elegiacs or Greek particles, no sympathy with, but a terrible and panic-striking horror of, such juvenile shortcomings as idleness, playfulness, and thoughtlessness. To be seen doing anything so vulgar as running, laughing, or wearing a shooting-coat would

be instant ruin to his reputation. He rules through the fear inspired by his power and dignity, and makes no question of the obedience of his subjects. As for their affection, he seems to despise it, and their confidence he can never hope to obtain. When he enters the room every voice must be sunk to a whisper, and every trivial amusement put a stop to. How his eye would wither up any unlucky youth whom he saw making grimaces in his presence! No boy dare speak to him till spoken to, and then only in a subdued tone of the utmost respect. His private room is looked upon as a den of lions, into which no boy, however conscious of rectitude, enters without perturbation. Verily a man altogether to be feared in reality, and with haste to be obeyed; and years afterwards, when the boy goes out into the world, he still fears, and perhaps respects, that man in his inmost heart. With his lips he may ridicule his peculiarities, and mimic his accent, as of old, but if he had occasion to pay a visit to him in that awful presence-chamber of his, I trow his heart would be thrice set round with triple brass if it did not sink just a little; and his hand would be endued with more than mortal strength if it knocked at that well-known door with manly confidence.

The other class of schoolmasters has been increasing and multiplying of late years. He has a more difficult game to play with his boys, yet a pleasanter

one. He joins in their sports and occupations, he talks their talk, he sympathizes with their joys and sorrows. He thus not only gains their confidence more readily, but renders himself obnoxious to their approval and censure far more than if he stood on his professional dignity. So long as a dominie remains on the summit of Olympus and thunders forth his decrees upon earth beneath, he may hope to be sheltered from obloquy by the cloud of fear and reverence in which he is enveloped. The patient crowd shrink from his thunderbolts, and exclaim, 'It is Jupiter Tonans; we are but mortals.' But if he slip down from the celestial heights, and wander among his subjects in human form, they grow forgetful of his power, and judge him by their own standards. Therefore he must take heed to himself that he stumble not, or great will be his fall. A teacher will get into sad trouble by showing too much of his character to his boys when it is a character that cannot bear their keen scrutiny.

All the more credit does a man deserve who can thus put himself on a level with his boys, and at the same time rule them manfully, and keep their respect. But remember that it doesn't follow that the master who goes on the friendly and familiar tack with boys is always the most popular or the most useful one. Just as a man who is dignified and reserved may possibly be beloved, and have a great amount of

influence with his boys; so a man who is familiar, may be hated or despised by them. A man can't act contrary to his nature well; and boys will soon find him out, and rate him at his proper value if he does. They hate a man who imitates friendliness with them as much as, or perhaps even more than, a man who professes open enmity. There is no use in coming purring among them, toadying their weaknesses, and trying to talk nonsense to them, if you are not genial and true-hearted. You must act honestly, according to your character and the circumstances in which you are placed, and if you are also just and sensible, and your pupils are real, sound-hearted boys, not young gentlemen nor mammas' darlings, you may be sure of gaining, not popularity perhaps, but certainly respect.

Among these two orders of schoolmasters, four classes or species ought to be held in abhorrence—yea, five are an abomination.

First, the *brutal* master. There are such men, even in the highest ranks of our profession, who bring shame on themselves and their cause by the want of command over temper, and consequent cruelty which they too often display. I have seen a man bearing the image of a scholar and a gentleman, rush upon a boy, knock him down, kick him while on the ground, and abuse him in the most violent and unjust terms for some scarcely imaginable fault. I

have stood by at such a scene till I burst into tears of rage, and, boy as I was, I had almost rushed forward to interfere, and spoken out my mind to the enraged savage. And this gentleman would get into the pulpit next Sunday, and exhort his victims to follow the precepts of the blessed law of love, which it is such men's business to preach, but only their duty to practise. What wonder if his hearers listened to that gospel message without belief! I have known a worse case, that of a man who seemed to glory in being in a chronic state of ill-temper, who would rub his hands and chuckle over every punishment which he could manage to effect, and would look positively disappointed if by a lucky chance a boy slipped through his fingers so completely that there could be no possible excuse for wreaking vengeance on him.

Your geniuses furnish a large contingent to this wretched class of teachers. A don, fresh from college, full of hope and enthusiasm, is placarded before the public with all his titles at his tail, and unto him do parents, rejoicing and confiding, send their darlings, that they too might be instructed how to become geniuses and gain fellowships. Our scholar sets to work with much fanfaronading, but soon is disgusted to find out, what he had forgotten, that there are such things as stupidity and idleness in this world. He grows wroth that his pupils are not as perfect as himself; he forgets to be kind and patient;

he storms, he blusters, and naturally things only get worse. But instead of retiring gracefully, and seeking wealth and ease in a butcher's shop, or some other profitable business, he fights on bravely but blindly, and his work grows daily more hateful and irksome to him—*plectuntur Achivi.* He finds now that his first class at the University and his fellowship at St. Albans are of little good to him, except to attract new pupils—new troubles—to fill up the places of those he has driven away by his bad temper. There is yet one chance of safety for him, if haply he go to London and become a writer for the 'Weekly Scourge,' in which he may discharge his bile upon mankind, and in time regain good temper and sanity. But more likely, led on by his evil genius, in sheer despair he takes a country grammar-school, drags out a miserable life in a state of constant and rancorous war with boyhood, and finally dies unknown and unlamented.

Can boys be expected to like such a man? Yet if he be only hot-tempered and cruel at times, with lucid intervals, they will make great allowance for his weakness, seeing that it is one which they can well understand and sympathize with; and, I think, they will bestow a much greater portion of their ill-will upon the objectionable character whom we may call the *snarling* master. This individual's voice bespeaks his hateful nature at once. It is a perpetual snarl, in

which he delivers the utterances of a cynical, loveless heart. He may not be severe or unjust, but he is always finding fault, and that too in the most disagreeable way possible. No word of kindly praise or genial encouragement ever escapes from his lips. He never takes notice of merits, but his eye is keen for imperfections. For all his pupils know, he is a machine, employed to fill their little heads with as much Latin and Greek as can be safely got thereinto, but caring no more for them further than if they were so many pieces of earthenware. Whoever knows how the nature of boyhood yearns for love and help and sympathy, must know in what evil odour such a teacher will be held by his pupils.

Uniting some of the faculties of both of these, and probably more disliked than either, is the *stupid* dominie. The stupid dominie has perhaps a very wise face, looking grandly and dignifiedly over a white choker—but he is a fool. He may not be cynical nor passionate, but his unpardonable sin is that he does not understand boys nor his duty towards them. He has a vague, hazy idea that it is the chief business of a schoolmaster to punish boys, especially if he catches them enjoying themselves. So if one boy drops a marble in school, it is 'Smith, write three hundred lines,' or if another winks at his crony sitting opposite, it is 'Jones, come to my room at three o'clock.' And so two merry boys are per-

haps made as miserable as a man can make them for a whole afternoon, while their guide, philosopher, and friend, sits complacently in his desk, thinking he has done rather a clever stroke of business for the day. He is in his glory if he can catch a dozen boys making a noise somewhere and looking happy; then he swoops down upon them and gives them a hundred lines all round, with great gusto. He is always seeing where wise teachers would take good care not to see, and interfering where his interference can do no possible good, and may do a great deal of harm. He cultivates a professional instinct, which leads him to thirst for the blood of boy, and he has no knowledge of any form of reasoning but his cane. Why, I have seen him hammering away at a plucky boy, who was standing silent and immoveable, with set lips and knitted brows, and after dismissing him to be a martyr among his school-fellows, he would sheathe his weapon in triumph, as if he had gained a great victory. I am certain a skilful master could have made that boy speak, ay, and weep, and confess his fault with real penitence and repentance, by the use alone of that little member the tongue, which, in the mouth of a wise man, is a more powerful thing than all the canes in the pig-headed creature's class-room. His punishments do little good service in preventing wrong-doing; they only make boys crouch like hounds before his face and curse him behind his back. And

even if he does punish with good reason, he has the remarkable knack of managing to make it all appear the result of mere caprice or revenge. This is what I call the stupid schoolmaster, from whom Heaven preserve all brave and kindly boys! Oh! it does make me angry to see such men trusted to work with the precious metal of boyhood, like a blacksmith essaying to fashion pure gold. But such men do teach and flourish; their boys do not like to complain, and so suffer in silence, happily ignorant of more fortunate lot. Now and then the pent-up ill-feeling will boil over; a rash champion will stand up in defiant mutiny; but the matter will blow past; the alarmed ruler, like other rulers, will strive to pacify his subjects, either by grape and canister or by a temporary display of prudence and generosity, as circumstances may advise, and then all will go on as before. Once in a world's history arises a deliverer, a Marcus Furius Camillus, by whom the tyrant, being caught tripping, is bound and delivered over to his subjects, that gleefully and fearlessly they may thrash him to their hearts' content.

The fourth kind of schoolmaster to whom I wish to hint that he has mistaken his vocation, is very different from these three. I mean the easy-going, tender-hearted master, the man who is too lazy and good-natured to do his duty to boys, and seeks only for their goodwill. He may gain this from the worse

part of his boys, but he may make up his mind to do without the respect of any. No one can have a greater contempt than boys for silly good-nature in a teacher. 'He can't teach!' one of my boys once said to me in a tone of the utmost scorn, speaking of a former instructor. 'If you didn't know your lesson one day, he scolded you. If you didn't know it two days running, then he kept you in to learn it. And he never licked you unless you didn't know it on the third day.' So the poor gentleman's patience and long-suffering had only excited the ridicule of the boys whom he was treating so affectionately. My young friend had soon occasion to discover that I was by no means so good-natured; and though I daresay he didn't fully appreciate the merits of my system, yet I have no doubt he was proud of it, and boasted among his companions of my promptitude to come down upon him. Boys take a positive pride in a teacher who keeps a tight hold over them and makes them stick to their work, and such a man's strictness will not in the least stand in the way of his popularity, if he be just and genial.

At all events any affection which such toadying to the failings of boys may secure from them will pass away when they grow older. They will then see the real merits of their teachers in a juster light, and will not fail to despise the man who was too good-natured or too weak to punish their faults. In illustration of

which I may tell a story, relating, as many other stories in this book do, to my own juvenile experiences. In the days of nurserydom and womanly rule, while yet my mind was uncultured and my stomach weak, it chanced that I fell sick. The usual council of the higher domestic powers was held over my prostrate form, and the usual fiat went forth that I should imbibe a nauseous mixture, the very name of which still makes me shudder. My nurse received the fatal cup, and approached the bed; but I, as yet ignorant of the noble fortitude of Socrates under similar circumstances, wept, and implored her to have mercy. Thereupon she, being moved to pity, and being, as she remarked, 'not very well herself,' volunteered to drink the horrid stuff instead of me, if I would say nothing about it. Gladly I consented. She drained the bowl, and I hope it did her good—the want of it, luckily, did me no harm. I was grateful to her, and rejoiced for the time being; but when years rolled over my head, and the Boy (with a capital B) had passed into the Youth, I began to reflect that, however fond my Aunt Tabitha was of drenching me with drugs, still she ought to have known best what was necessary for the welfare of my digestive organs, and that possibly the want of this medicine might have been the death of me. Now, my nurse Betsey was just like those *blandi doctores* whom I object to, with a spice of selfish principle

superadded to her motives for indulgence, for she would not have vicariously taken my draught if she had not believed that it would benefit her own stomach; and I am sure she had the lion's share of the plum-cake which had arrived in the nursery the day before. But I digress. Pardon me, reader. In a book about boys, I may perhaps be allowed to run astray after every phantom of my own boyhood that comes glimmering across my subject.

Though I consider the too good-natured dominie a dangerous character, I must say that I sympathize very much with him. It is so hard to punish—boys don't know how hard. It is their temptation to be idle and riotous, and it is our temptation often not to do our duty in checking their faults, so dear to us are their smiles and happy laughter.

Like unto the good-natured master, but perhaps even more obnoxious in some respects, is the *new-light* master. This is the man who has 'ideas,' and 'methods,' and 'systems,' some of them ridiculous, and some harmless enough, but some most pernicious. He supposes that no one ever knew how to teach till he appeared on the firmament of education. He laughs at all our scholastic customs and traditions. He professes to abhor punishment, and all the other stern realities of school life. He has discovered easy and speedy ways of learning, and he has no doubt but that human nature will readily conform

itself to his theories. Alas for such men! facts are stubborn. The road to knowledge is at best but a long and weary way, full of steep ascents and dangerous pitfalls, thickset with sharp thorns and cruel stones. Day and night it would resound with wails and groans were it not for the blessed light-heartedness and the inextinguishable mirth which Heaven has granted to the little travellers thereon. No man can make that way short and easy; and all the teacher can do is to beguile its length and hardness by song and dance—yea, and the sweet pride of doing and suffering manfully. Therefore I hold in scorn the man who pretends to do that which God hath not seen good to have done.

Having spoken out my mind against those schoolmasters as they too often are, I would say something about what a schoolmaster ought to be. I profess faith in no particular theories, and in no specifics except firmness, kindness, and common-sense, all brought into play, in connexion with a judicious use of Lion. I can't charge myself with being either fond or savage. I have found that boys are very much as they are treated. If you are too easy and indulgent with them they will take the reins into their own hands, and lead you a pretty dance after them. If you are too strict and exacting, they will become sly and cunning; but if you treat them with firmness and discretion, you will have no difficulty with an ordinary team.

Boys appreciate being ruled like reasonable beings. They will obey a strong despot, whose only law seems to them his temper and caprice; but they will obey with far more readiness and cheerfulness a constitutional monarch, who shows them clearly how the principle of his rule is the common good of all. Boys know very well that they sometimes do wrong, and deserve to be punished; and the discreet dominie will make good use of this knowledge. Furthermore, he will not frown too severely on every little fault, but will keep his real thunderbolts for heinous sinners—the liar, the bully, and the brute. He will say to his boys in effect: 'I know that you are naturally prone to laugh and chatter and play tricks and make grimaces, in season and out of season; and you know that I am here to make you do something more useful, though less agreeable, at certain times and places; and you know, too, that if I did not make you do this I should be a muff and a humbug. I know, moreover, that you are willing enough to believe me, and to do as I wish you, but I know that you are unsteady of purpose and weak of memory; and therefore, when you forget or fail to obey me I shall feel myself under the necessity of stimulating your will and memory by some such simple means as—*voilà!* And I expect you, on the other hand, to take it all in good part, and to believe that it is no pleasure to me to see those little hands

clenched in pain, and these little lips working hard to repress your feelings. So let us fight a fair battle as honourable enemies, and live as kindly friends in due times of peace, thinking no harm of each other, because the one acts according to his nature, and the other according to his duty; and let us both agree to hate and scorn whatever is mean or foul or dishonest, whether in man or boy.'

Such an appeal as this will not be found to lack fitting response. And the advantage of ruling your boys on such principles will be some degree of mutual trust and kindly goodwill. The boys will not look upon you so much as their natural enemy, but rather as a friend to whom they may tell their joys and sorrows, and receive encouragement and sympathy. You will find that you can best put down certain forms of misbehaviour by warning your boys against them, and asking them to fix their own punishment if they forget the warning. You will find that if a boy tell you a deliberate lie, his companions will at once betray him by a hearty groan of disgust. You will find that if you have forgotten to inflict a certain punishment which you had ordered, the culprits themselves will not hesitate to remind you. You will find a boy asking to be punished, when you are inclined to let him off, 'and then I'm not likely to do it again.' You will find that boys take a pride in your justice and severity, and value your praise

and blame more keenly than you might suppose it possible. Why, the severest punishment I ever inflict is not to speak to a boy for some days. This is reserved for lying and suchlike offences, and if the culprit be not hardened, you may see him with downcast looks, hanging about me or placing himself in my way day after day, in hopes of one word as a sign of returning favour.

All this you may experience as a schoolmaster, if you are not a stock and a stone with a black coat on your back, a cane in your hand, and an LL.D. after your name. Too many of our teachers are such lay figures.

The schoolmaster will also have a better chance of gaining influence over his pupils, if he take some interest in their pursuits out of school, which, after all, in a boy's eyes, are the most important interests of life. A certain poet, who was a prejudiced enemy to schools, speaks with great scorn of the race of schoolmasters of his day—

> 'Public hackneys in the schooling-trade,
> Who feed a pupil's intellect with store
> Of syntax, truly, but with little more;
> Dismiss their cares when they dismiss their flock,
> Machines themselves, and governed by a clock.'

With characteristic want of knowledge of the frailties of human nature, our poet goes on to recommend a select course of botany, astrology, and theology to be pursued by master and pupil in their hours of

leisure; but without going so far we may express a hope that the race of teachers who look upon their boys merely as receptacles for grammar, is already far on its way to extinction. The model schoolmaster of the present day is wiser, and studies to be his boys' playfellow and companion, that he may the better know how to be their ruler. How many learned mollahs are there who are great in the cricket-field! How many who can knock over their pupils at football as well as in Euclid! To some masters, indeed, these fields of distinction are forbidden. It is not given to every one to wield the bat of Tom Brown. A man may be a good teacher, and have a poor biceps. And do not some of us wear spectacles, and some wigs? Old teachers, too, who have been reared in the stately traditions of the *ancien régime*, cannot easily throw off their prejudices, and shake their heads, half-approvingly, half-doubtfully, over the free and easy intercourse which has to a great measure succeeded to the old ideas of scholastic discipline. But in such cases, is it not allowable to assume a virtue if you have it not? I don't ask you, my paunchy friend, to go to the wicket, or to take part in a 'scrimmage' in person; but without going so far, you may do much to make your pupils feel that you are not a walking dictionary, but a man that once was a boy.

Thus is it possible for the schoolmaster to become

truly the ruler, the king of boys, the fountain of honour among them, the model of excellence. Then will he be obeyed readily, not servilely, by subjects who will fight for the honour of doing his bidding. Then will his kindly word of praise be thirsted for; one sentence from him will make a boy a pundit or a hero; and his censure will call forth shame and contempt. Then will he not be deceived and plotted against, because his boys will do everything by his advice or orders. Then will his companionship and presence be counted honour and happiness; his smiles will be waited for by simple courtiers, his wants anticipated by honest sycophants. But my fancy runs away with my judgment; this will be the golden age, as yet far off. Nevertheless, should we not rejoice the nearer we can attain to it?

I have meant the latter part of this chapter to go to prove that ruling boys is not of itself such an invidious and ungrateful duty as some people believe it to be, and that the rulers of boys may possibly find a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction in their task. But I must admit that the truly good schoolmaster cannot always expect to be liked by his subjects. Boys are ignorant and capricious, they have whims and prejudices, and sometimes they do not understand or appreciate the labours of a really kind-hearted man who is working hard for their good. Such a man is to be pitied and praised if he stick to

his work bravely and faithfully in spite of discouragement. But I don't think any man should continue to be a master who finds himself actually hated by his boys, so that he rules merely by brute force.

Between you and me, reader, I have got on with this chapter faster than is my wont, thanks to an attack of illness which has for some days confined me to the house. Outside is the white, crisp snow and the cold treacherous wind; inside a warm fire and a pile of medicine-bottles which my doctor has sent me, some of which I am dosing myself with, while others, guided by a happy instinct, I propose to consign to oblivion. I sit lolling on an easy-chair, luxuriously sipping slops, and ever and anon jotting down a page or two of these lucubrations. And as I turn over this subject in my head I cannot prevent my memory from straying back to days long gone by, when I, a foolish boy, was glad to be confined to bed, and be shut out from the merry sunshine and the clear frosty air, and to eat slops and endure blisterings and dosings, and all this joyfully and thankfully —why? Because of a man who was at that time the shadow of my young life, because he was fierce and unjust and cynical and passionate, because I hated and feared him, as boys, thank God! seldom hate or fear, so well did he use his power to make my life miserable. I was glad to be sick and a prisoner, so that I might be away from him, and I know that

many of my school-fellows had the same feeling. What a song of triumph we sang in our hearts when he fell ill!—not that he often gave us cause so to rejoice, for he was a provokingly healthy animal.

I introduce this for the purpose of saying, that if I thought my boys rejoiced over my illness as we rejoiced over that man's, I would straightway go and hang myself on what Mr. Carlyle would call 'the nearest sufficient tree,' not without testamentary disposition of funds to erect a monument, with suitable inscription, seeing that so little love and respect should be otherwise destined to honour my grave.

CHAPTER XI.

BOOKS FOR BOYS.

'Pauci, quos æquus amavit
Jupiter, aut ardens evexit ad æthera virtus,
Dis geniti, potuere.' —VIRGIL.

IF I visit my bookseller's at this beautiful season of the year I probably find his counter covered with gaily bound volumes, red, blue, and green, which I at once recognise as books for the young. Further examination establishes the fact that the majority of them are stories for boys. Why girls should be so inadequately provided for in this respect is no business of mine. I suppose it is considered by their monitors that the offscourings of the circulating libraries are good enough for them. But I rejoice over the activity which is displayed in ministering to the literary tastes of boys.

In our day we were not so well off. A boy's library was thought to be very complete if it con-

tained 'Robinson Crusoe,' 'Sandford and Merton,' and Edgeworth's Tales, with one or two of a class of smaller stories, which have since been buried in oblivion. Most of these were very like one another in plot. The chief *dramatis personæ* were three—a preternaturally wise and just schoolmaster, with spectacles, who dealt largely in useful information, and precepts savouring of the classics rather than Christianity, a young fiend in human shape, whom we may call Master Badboy, and a stainless angel of the same dimensions, who serves as hero. This model Master Goodboy is represented as passing triumphantly through all sorts of temptations, and as rebuking his wicked companion in most edifying and grammatical language. Master Badboy, not profiting thereby, is held up to the moral indignation of the reader, and finally comes to grief, being discovered by the sapient preceptor in some heinous naughtiness, whereupon he either repents or is visited with poetic and scholastic justice, according to the taste of the writer, and his or her opinions on the subject of corporal punishment.

Boys used to read this sort of thing with a certain delight, just as they would read the story of 'Puss in Boots,' never for one moment supposing, however, that the characters were meant for human beings like themselves, or that the warnings and examples held up by the author had any connexion with their own

daily life. At least I can remember no such effect produced on me, and in my youth I was a by no means unfrequent votary of this Muse. We didn't often meet with Master Badboy at school, still seldomer with Master Goodboy; and though our schoolmaster wore spectacles, he talked very much like an ordinary mortal, and used to flog us without making any grand speeches or quoting any Latin whatever. So we did not believe much in our story-books, but, knowing no better, we took what we got, and were thankful.

What a change from all this state of things was 'Tom Brown's School Days'! Then, probably for the first time, English boys saw themselves described as they were. The former tales were written as truthfully and naturally as if a distinguished lady author had sat down to give us an account of the man in the moon; this was as if the man in the moon had taken the trouble to write an autobiography of himself. There could be no doubt about it; Harry East, Tom Brown, the bully Flashman, and old Diggs were actual, living boys, whom one played with and fought with, and got into scrapes with, every day of one's life. Henceforth the British boy's eyes were opened, and his critical sense awakened. He began to know good from evil, to see that an interesting story need not be a silly one, and to demand that the dregs of literary talent should no longer be devoted to his amusement.

There is no doubt that the great charm of 'Tom Brown' is the unexpected way in which a didactic writer sympathizes with boy nature. But as an impartial critic, I must be allowed to observe that this sympathy is deep rather than broad. It is a fault in the book that the author seems in concord only with one type of boy, albeit a very common one. 'There is but one estimable young John Bull, and Tom Brown is his prophet,' is his creed. Tom is a very excellent fellow in his way, but I venture to think that there are other types of boys just as good, for whom the author seems to have little sympathy. Conscious of this fault, he has introduced the very opposite character of Arthur, but we can't help seeing that Arthur is dragged in to play propriety before the general public, and we clearly notice that neither the author nor his hero takes quite kindly to Arthur till Arthur takes to cricket. Now, I have known many real boys, and capital fellows, who didn't play cricket, and I have known many of your public-school muscular Christians who were the arrantest puppies.

It is evident also that the author is prejudiced in favour of his old school, and is trying to make out a good case for it. We practical schoolmasters have an idea that in the latter part of the book, at least, he doesn't tell us the whole truth about Tom's mode of life, and would like to look a little closer into that cigar-case

of Harry East's. Besides, we are rather scandalized at the way in which he seems to chuckle over the reprehensible tricks of his characters, and are inclined to doubt whether the 'beer and skittles' element is not presented too attractively. Dr. Arnold may have seen good to wink at it, but I, for one, should scarcely think that drinking beer and singing 'Three Jolly Postboys' was favourable to scholastic morality.

But the occasional earnestness and outspokenness of the author are beyond all praise. The lesson of the book is described in words which he puts into the mouth of one of his characters :—

'He made it out just as if it was taking the weak side against all the world—going in once for all against everything that 's strong and rich and proud and respectable, a little band of brothers against the whole world.'

This is the most attractive form in which the spirit of religion can be presented to a high-spirited boy, and the author has put these precepts into the mouths of his favourite characters with such power and fidelity to nature, that they will have as good a chance as ever mortal precepts had of commanding attention.

Next to 'Tom Brown,' the most popular story of schoolboy life is perhaps Mr. Farrar's 'Eric.' 'St. Winifred's' by the same author, is only an echo of his better-known book, for whose influence many boys and men will thank him all their lives. 'Tom

Brown' was written from a boy's point of view; 'Eric' more from a master's, its author holding that position in one of our great public schools. Hence, though it does not want kindly sympathy for the light-heartedness and thoughtlessness of boys, there is perhaps just a little too much favour shown to good boys who keep at the head of their form, and take trouble with their exercises. A schoolmaster is rather apt to get into a way of looking at his pupils through professional spectacles; but for my part I am rather distrustful of your good, prize-taking boys. My heart is rather with the bad boys who get into scrapes and don't learn their Latin rules. But that is a matter of taste.

Another fair criticism on Mr. Farrar is that his style is rather gushing. It isn't his fault; he is a poet, and in that capacity, keeps a large stock of crimson, blue, and gold on hand, which some people think he has besprinkled rather too liberally on his prose pages, with alternate shades of the very darkest hue. But that also is perhaps a matter of taste.

The great power of 'Eric' is the way in which it enters into the secret places of the human heart. 'Tom Brown' is a book which will tickle and please boys more; but 'Eric' will influence in a far greater degree a boy who has feelings and sentiments to be influenced. And boys have feelings and sentiment as well as muscles: indeed, who has not—except

perhaps Saturday Reviewers and such like? The author of 'Tom Brown' recognises this fact, and thinks it necessary to illustrate it by making Arthur burst into tears while reading a touching passage in Homer. I never knew a boy weep over Homer—I mean a top boy who had learned his lesson, for I have known a naughty boy who hadn't learned his lesson weep most copiously over passages with nothing more affecting in them than *τον δ' αμειβόμενος;* but I believe that many boys have wept again and again over the descriptions of Eric's adventure at the stack, and of Vernon's death. Some years ago there was exhibited a beautiful little picture of 'Eric's return,' which might have drawn tears from the eyes of any man who was acquainted with the story. Certainly this book is unrivalled of its kind for dramatic power and pathos.

Mr. Farrar paints the dark side of schoolboy life more fully and faithfully than the author of 'Tom Brown,' but he never sets scenes of evil before us without speaking out his fierce horror and hatred, in such a way as to carry the moral sense of his readers along with him. There can be no mistake about what he means to teach us. If we have a spark of right feeling in us, we can't help admiring his good boys and despising his bad ones. We may be good enough friends with Brigson and Barker in real life, but on Mr. Farrar's pages we are made to hate them

as they deserve, and when the proper time comes, we are ready, every boy of us, to jump on the table with Wildney, and join in the wrathful chorus, 'Three hoots, hisses, and groans for a liar and a coward!'

These two admirable books stand a long way ahead of the ruck of schoolboy stories. But for some years their name has been legion, and their end peace. Christmas after Christmas we have beheld new bantlings of this kind struggle forth into existence. One or two have laboured on into a second edition; but *abiit ad plures* is the epitaph of the rest, who have sunk full soon to their long last sleep beneath the counter of the butterman. Yet the cry is still 'They come,' and as long as hopeful authors have money wherewith to pay for printing and paper, so long will the shadowy train of books for the young flit Christmas by Christmas over the advertisement sheet of the *Times*, and then disappear, unbought, 'unfriended, melancholy, slow.'

One cause of such frequent failure is that many of this kind of story-book are written by well-meaning ladies who can't and don't know anything about boys. It is open to your female author to study the manifestations of adult passion in the looking-glass, and in contemporary literature, and she is nowise hindered from drawing upon the police reports and her imagination for bigamies, murders, forgeries, jiltings, and such-like materials for three-volumed novels. But

into the sacred portals of our schools she enters not; *Procul! O procul este, profanæ*, is written above them by wise hands. She is therefore necessarily ignorant of the ways and feelings of boys, which are only to be learned by experience; and yet she will insist upon writing about boys, as if they were as easy to depict as golden hair, clenched brows, flashing eyes, broken hearts, passionate vows, and other legitimate subjects of the feminine pen. Yet in spite of these disadvantages, more than one lady has succeeded in producing very fair pictures of schoolboy life. Books like 'Louis's School Days,' and 'Kenneth and Hugh,' though bearing on them the marks of woman's work, and containing rather too much preaching, are well calculated to interest and amuse boys, and the latter, with other works by the same authoress, deserves to be much more widely known than it is.

The chief objection urged against the majority of this class of books is that they are written 'with a purpose.' Cynical writers profess to speak with great contempt of the 'cant' contained in them, which means that the characters intended as examples are made to utter and act upon the religious principles which it is the chief aim of their authors to promulgate, but which, being mainly of the ordinary Tractarian or Evangelical type, are not looked upon with favour by clever critics. I have known a first-class journal treat a fairly meritorious boy's book with the

utmost contempt, simply because it professed to be written 'to advance the kingdom of Christ.' It is very easy to call this cant, but it is not fair. The same journal would praise up 'Tom Brown' to the skies, because, though it is written with an equally earnest purpose, the earnestness is of a type less repugnant to a certain class of minds—but only to a certain class. If the author of 'Tom Brown' is allowed in Arthur's vision of heaven, to make a boy particularize the fact that he saw 'infidels and atheists there,' why should a more orthodox writer be sneered at for making his or her pattern boy insist upon the dogma of Justification by Faith? The fact is that there is cant of one kind in 'Tom Brown,' of another kind in 'Eric,' of another in such a book as 'Louis's School Days'—cant meaning earnest expression of opinion upon the most important interests of life; and it is unjust of us, especially unjust of those who call themselves 'Liberal,' to condemn the one phase of earnestness while we extol the other. I am afraid nobody can accuse me of being too orthodox in my views, but fair play for all, say I. If we believe that we are fighting God's battle, let us fight with honest weapons; so let us judge every story of this kind by its literary merits, and not by its religious sentiments. Anyhow the latitudinarians bear away the prize; for neither 'Tom Brown' nor 'Eric' is very sound about salvation by faith and sacramental efficacy.

I don't believe that any good story of schoolboy life was ever written without 'a purpose.' More than one author has tried to gain for himself the popularity of 'Tom Brown' and 'Eric' by imitating the fidelity to boy-nature which so eminently characterizes them; but where their earnestness of purpose was wanting, these attempts have proved a failure, resulting in mere strings of anecdotes, which have served to amuse perhaps, but have taken no hold of and exercised no influence on the mind of boyhood.

It is much to be desired that some more good tales of this stamp should be produced, for, failing them, our boys are given over to the mercies of a very different class of writers. I mean those gentlemen of nautical and venatorial tastes, who devote themselves to compiling sensational accounts of perils and adventures by land and sea, flavoured strongly with shipwrecks, battles, lions, gorillas, and Red Indians. A little of this sort of thing is very well in its way, and I would by all means encourage a boy to read such books as 'The Swiss Family Robinson,' and the best of Kingston's and Ballantyne's stories. But at present the juvenile book-market is perfectly inundated with tales of this kind, some of them harmless enough, some of them very well-intentioned and not without the objectionable 'purpose;' some, on the other hand, most pernicious in their tendency—nearly all highly improbable and overstrained, and not a few

very ridiculous. The taste for this class of literature is dangerous; if you feed the imagination on marvels, it does not relish more simple and healthy diet, and in this way sensation-writing is doing much to unsettle our boys' minds, and disgust them with the realities of common life. Parents and teachers may moan over these evils, but they moan in vain, unless they are prepared to substitute literature as interesting and amusing as that which they wish to banish.

I am convinced that this might be done. It has been done in the higher walks of fiction—to some degree at least. Mrs. Radcliffe delighted the novel-reading portion of our ancestors; but what young lady ever thinks now of reading 'The Mysteries of Udolpho'? Do not the fair votaresses of Minerva rather seize upon tales, which, either in a quiet or in a thrilling manner, attempt to describe the every-day life of ourselves and our neighbours, and aim at creating an interest in such ordinary domestic affairs as are the personal experience of every family throughout the kingdom. So I believe that our boys would read with delight stories of their every-day life, written as a Thackeray or a Dickens or a 'George Eliot' could write them, as they have been written by the two authors I have already mentioned. No tale has half so much interest as that which is cleverly constructed out of joys and sorrows, and haps and hazards familiar to the

reader. Such tales, to please boys, might perhaps seem very stupid to grown-up critics; but that should not matter. What would seem tame and dull to you, Miss Romantic, might be a thrilling situation to your younger brother. 'What bosh all that is about Lady Audley shoving that fellow down the well!' I can hear him saying, 'but I wish you would let me read you this splendid bit about old Gordon catching Eric with the crib, and Eric taking a caning rather than tell on Barker.' For a caning, or a pillow-fight, or a run at hare-and-hounds is just as interesting to a schoolboy as a jilting or an unhappy marriage is to his sister.

If there were a larger and better supply of these tales, I prophesy that the trade of such authors as Captain Mayne Reid would soon suffer. And it would do our stories of school life no harm—it would make them appear no less real, that they were 'written with a purpose.' What is the chief characteristic of some of the best pictures of the lives of men and women in the present day, such pictures as we have in 'Alton Locke,' in 'Adam Bede,' in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' and a host of others? Is it not that they are written not only to amuse and pass away time, but to fight, nobly and earnestly, the battle of human nature against the same foe who is weekly defied from our pulpits? And is their popularity owing solely to their literary talent, or not in a great measure to

their earnestness of purpose? Certain interested parties are very wrathful at the idea of mixing sermons with stories; but, for my part, I believe that the more we can unite the tone of our sermons and our stories, the better it will be for our age, sadly deaf to mere sermons, and sadly credulous of mere stories.

But before leaving this subject, I wish to say something about the latest story of schoolboy life that has obtained any notoriety, believing that thereby I shall be doing a service to the public, which in this matter has been strangely ill-served by its professional critics.

The story I refer to, which appeared as the leading feature of a boys' magazine last year, is called 'The Orville College Boys.' It certainly may be said to have been written with a purpose—the purpose of afterwards doing duty for a two-volumed novel. Its author is Mrs. Henry Wood, well known to the public as a manufacturer of sensation novels in a peculiar language, based upon English. This lady having succeeded in introducing some rather life-like boys into 'The Channings,' must needs write a story of school life; and as it was also to be 'contrived a double debt to pay,' she must needs fill it with enough improbable nonsense to tickle the silliest girl that ever battened her weak brains on the dregs of a book-club.

Mrs. Henry Wood, as usual, is determined not to

fail from lack of excitement. This simple tale commences with a pistol being fired, and somebody being shot, and the culprit being not found out. Of course, this is all *de règle.* Going on, we find a forgery, a theft, an assumed name, a duel between two boys, and other little matters of every-day occurrence, which give promise that our authoress has plenty of material on hand for the exercise of her peculiar talent. The way in which these delightful and natural incidents are jumbled together is truly astonishing. As for the characters, Mrs. Henry Wood evidently means us to take them for the usual types of English schoolboys, and without going the length of contradicting a lady, I may say that such a set of impudent young snobs it was never my bad luck to meet with. The headmaster of Orville College is equally impressive and natural. He is represented as brandishing a huge birch, and addressing his pupils as 'gentlemen.' Does Mrs. Wood really suppose that headmasters of such schools as Orville College are in the habit of sitting at their desks and brandishing huge birches to overawe their pupils?

It would take too long to give any account of the plot of this remarkable work, with the forgery, theft, duel, etc. A few extracts will show what Mrs. Wood knows about school discipline, the ways and talk of boys, the elegancies of composition, and the rules of English grammar.

The most prominent character in the book—I don't know whether to call him the hero or not—is a gentleman who will henceforth be memorable in the annals of fiction for a double misnomer. In the first place, he passes under an assumed name; in the second, he is called by the authoress the German master of the college, while he is represented, on one occasion at least, as teaching Latin grammar. This individual, of excellent private character, great talents, and infirm health, must have been of invaluable assistance to the stern disciplinarian who flourishes the birch. Soon after his entrance on his duties he gets into a dreadful scrape with some of the senior boys. These young gentlemen thought fit one night to indulge in the amusement of smoking, for, as our authoress observes, they 'liked a pipe, cigar, or *screw*.' Did Mrs. Wood ever see a boy or anybody else smoking a screw? If so, will she tell us how people smoke screws? At all events, these experts in the threefold use of tobacco come to grief. They are seen by another boy, who informs one of the masters. This is the excuse which he gives for such conduct—

'My only motive in reporting it to you was their own good. I did not want them to get into a row. It *is* a pernicious habit.'

Acting upon this moral young man's information, the master taxes the delinquents with the offence. They deny it; but he refuses to believe them, and punishes

them all round. Naturally, they are rather disgusted at this, and begin to ask one another who could have betrayed them. Their suspicions turn upon the German master, and a deputation of them waits on him at his lodgings, to remonstrate about this supposed misconduct on his part. This is the way that boys speak to their masters at Orville College. Mr. Henry, the suspected culprit, has been asked by the spokesman of the party if he had seen their cigars the previous evening, as he was walking beneath the windows of the college :—

'"Both saw and smelt them," answered Mr. Henry, with a smile.

'"Exactly. Don't you think it was rather dishonourable of you to go and tell the English master of it this morning?"

'"I did not do so."

'"I think it was," continued Loftus, wholly disregarding the denial. "A gentleman could not be guilty of such an act. You have but just come among us; and in any case the matter was none of yours. Perhaps you will concern yourself in future with your own affairs and not with ours."

'Except for the stress laid on the word *gentleman* there was nothing offensive in the cold tone. Mr. Henry evidently thought so, for he only answered—

'"I should think you did not hear my denial, Loftus. I assure you I have not spoken of this."'

Shade of Dr. Busby! Was ever a schoolmaster such an incomparable idiot as to sit still and allow his pupils to talk to him in this style and to see 'nothing offensive' in it? But all Mr. Henry's mildness and suavity are of no avail. He is branded with the suspicion of having interfered with the stolen

pleasures of the boys, and thenceforth leads a dog's life among them.

Here is a pretty little scene, which frequently occurs in the play-grounds of such schools as Orville College. A fight is going on: Mr. Henry arrives, and attempts to put an end to it.

'"Move away," said Loftus to him. "What business is it of yours?"

'"The business of authority!" was Mr. Henry's answer, delivered with calm decision.'

('My eye!' one can fancy some small boy exclaiming at this grandiloquent reply; but Mrs. Wood's boys seem to be quite accustomed to this sort of thing.)

'"So long as I hold the position of master here, I shall act as such when need arises. Gentlemen," and he looked at both equally, "there must be no more of this."'

One would laugh at this balderdash if one was not so disgusted to think that it is being sold and read all over the country as a true picture of English schoolboy life. This Mr. Henry, who talks so finely, is described as having been at one period of his life 'a *master* at Heidelberg University.' Such a person might be supposed to be a man of some education, and would not be likely to address his pupils in the language of a three-volume novelist.

Mr. Henry is a particular pet of our authoress, and she is very anxious that we should not think too

meanly of his qualifications as a disciplinarian. So she introduces him as a *deus ex machina* at another fight :—

'He stopped the blows with his firm and gentle hands, spoke words of calm good sense,' etc. etc. 'For never was authority more uncompromising than his when he choose to exert it. . . . It was ever so : (!) Come upon what scene of conflict he would, Mr. Henry was sure to turn it to peace.'

This *is* good. Mr. Henry is canonized by Mrs. Wood because he puts an end to fights, 'stopping the blows with his firm and gentle hands,' etc. Well, brother dominies, do your pupils generally go on fighting in your presence till you part them in this manner? If mine did, there would be much more firmness than gentleness in my use of my hands. What is the use of a head-master who brandishes a birch, if all this work is necessary to turn scenes of conflict into peace?

But I have quoted enough to show the nature of this work of art. The story comes to an end in the orthodox way. The forgery, theft, etc., get wound clear in due time, and the stage is cleared for the last scene, which is introduced in this beautiful sentence : —'The term was drawing near to its end : Mr. Henry in his proximate dwelling was drawing near to his.' The *dénouement* is completed by the young gentleman who acts the part of sneak, and as such is terribly kicked about by both the authoress and her characters. This individual at the proper time gives

intimation that he 'can't let the opportunity pass without declaring a thing that is in my keeping.' (This is the same young gentleman who objected to smoking as a pernicious habit.) He declares the thing that is in his keeping, and there is a great hubbub consequent upon the complete clearing up of the forgery, theft, pistol-shot, etc. Finally, Mr. Henry dies in his proximate dwelling, leaving to his penitent pupils a text of the Bible, written in his own hand, which they agree to frame and glaze, and with regard to which the senior boy remarks, 'Us (*sic*) senior fellows will be gone, but we can come in sometimes and look at it.'

We fervently hope, on closing the book, that they did so; and we hope that 'them seniors' took a few lessons in elementary English grammar, and that the doctor brandished his birch for the future to more purpose; and that the gentleman who succeeded Mr. Henry behaved like a gentleman about smoking, and didn't force his pupils to the disagreeable necessity of waiting on him at his 'proximate dwelling' to remonstrate; and that Mrs. Henry Wood will for the future confine herself to writing three-volumed novels in which her peculiar gifts may possibly be displayed to more advantage than in the wretched collection of trash, called 'The Orville College Boys.'

I am afraid my motives in making these strictures may be misconstrued. I may be supposed to be

some one who has a pique against Mrs. Henry Wood; but my only motive is, as I have said, to ask the public if it wishes to buy and read this style of literature; and to vent the indignation which is roused within me at seeing boys and school-life so slandered without a voice being raised in their defence. This book is being circulated all over the country; and lazy critics, looking at the title-page and smelling the paper-knife, set their fiat upon it thus: 'Mrs. Henry Wood's name is a guarantee for the excellence,' etc.; or, 'This is a capital story for boys, and one which,' etc. Whereas any educated man could not fail to see in ten minutes that the estimate I have formed of it is not too low. Where are our literary police? Looking after some poor scribbler who, by dint of hard and honest labour, is trying to set foot for the first time in the magic circle wherein the authoress of 'The Orville College Boys' basks in the smiles of Fortune.

O Success! goddess dear to Britons, be pleased to wait upon me also in my humble labours! Be near me as I write, perch upon my inkstand, guide my quill, that I too may be able to turn my feeblest thoughts into grammar if possible, but at least into gold! Sound thy brazen trumpet before me, that the rusty gates of Paternoster Row may be flung open at my approach; and the eager bibliopoles, cheque-books in hand, may rush forth to welcome

my coming! Then to thee will I likewise sacrifice grammar and common-sense—yea, and the sweet graces of rhetoric. Which things are an allegory, to be understood only by much pondering over the quotation at the head of this chapter, and careful reference to the works of Mr. Anthony Trollope.

CHAPTER XII.

BOYS IN BOOKS.

'Interdum vulgus rectum videt; est ubi peccat.'—HORACE.

BUT there are not only books for boys; there are books for older people, into which boys are often introduced, for the most part faring very ill therein. Indeed, it is enough to make one's blood boil to see the way in which a cowardly bully of a grown-up author often insults and tramples on poor boys who can't say a word for themselves in return.

To begin with fiction, which seems to form the chief part of our literature now-a-days. Is it not a shame that in most of our novels boys should be treated slightingly and with cold indifference, should be shoved into a corner to make way for the namby-pamby trifling of curates, captains, and marriageable young ladies, or only brought forward to be sneered at and ridiculed? That comes of having our novels written by women!

To their honour be it spoken, however, the four principal novelists of our generation—Lytton, Dickens, Thackeray, and 'George Eliot'—have been rather more generous and just to boyhood, though their generosity and justice are not always according to knowledge.

Bulwer Lytton has been anxious to be fair to boys, and his intentions are extremely creditable to him. I say *intentions*, because they are faulty in the execution. His boys are rather too airy and phantom-like, with their delight in Youth, and their aspirations after the True and the Beautiful. They are pleasing enough pictures, but they look too unsubstantial to be caned or to have their ears pulled. One can't imagine them playing at hockey, or swopping an old knife for half-a-dozen apples. I object to their poetical tastes, and the precocious knowledge of the world which they are allowed to acquire. And I should like to have a word or two with Master Pisistratus Caxton, about the cool way in which he speaks to his uncle on their first acquaintance.

Mr. Dickens has a great deal of sympathy with boys, and a great dislike to schoolmasters, for which dislike I have no doubt that reasons might be found in the history of his own youth. There is nothing inconsistent in a good novelist having been a bad boy. But his boys, though cleverly sketched, like all his characters, are also, like most of his characters, either caricatures or lay figures. So far as I re-

member, the most natural of them seems to be Tommy Traddles, who is thus introduced :—

'Poor Traddles. In a tight sky-blue suit, that made his arms and legs like German sausages, or roly-poly puddings, he was the merriest and most miserable of all the boys. He was always being caned—I think he was caned every day that half year, except one holiday Monday that he was only rulered on both hands—and was always going to write to his uncle about it, and never did. After laying his head on the desk for a little while, he would cheer up somehow, begin to laugh again, and draw skeletons all over his slate, before his tears were dry.

'He was very honourable, Traddles was ; and held it as a solemn duty in the boys to stand by one another. He suffered for this on several occasions ; and particularly once, when Steerforth laughed in church, and the beadle thought it was Traddles, and took him out. I see him now, going away in custody, despised by the congregation. He never said who was the real offender, though he smarted for it next day, and was imprisoned so many hours, that he came forth with a whole churchyard-full of skeletons swarming over his Latin Dictionary. But he had his reward. Steerforth said that there was nothing of the sneak in Traddles, and we all felt that to be the highest praise.'

Though I am no literary Steerforth, to pay compliments to Mr. Dickens, I must say that this is capital, and I regret that he has not taken like pains to give all his boys characters, as well as vices and virtues, jackets and waistcoats, and the other indispensable equipments of juvenile *dramatis personæ*.

Thackeray is more of a connoisseur in his boys, and has evidently taken more trouble with their production. There is a genuine flavour of the schoolroom and the playground about them, which does one's heart good. 'Dr. Birch and his young friends' has some touches which raise this author far above the

ordinary run of writers for grown-up people. Yet it is no disparagement to an amateur—a lay dabbler in boys—to hint that his stock of boy characters is limited. As far as I remember, nearly all his boys may be referred to three models:—*First*, the high-spirited, open-handed, curly-haired boy, like Clive Newcome, who, with darker hair, and a considerable dash of extravagant selfishness in him, does duty again for George Osborne. This is Thackeray's favourite boy, certainly his most captivating, and, perhaps, his most artistic one. *Secondly*, Dobbin, an awkward, stupid boy of plebeian extraction, who astonishes everybody by some sudden display of virtue as against a big bully, and afterwards develops into a most sensible and amiable man. *Thirdly*, a sneaking, cowardly wretch, who tells tales, sells penknives, and bullies small boys. Not a bad *répertoire*, a much better one than many professional dealers with boys could evolve from the depths of their experience.

But of all novelists who have delighted to honour boys, commend me to 'George Eliot.' So far as I know, this writer has only given one boy to the world—but *mihi unus instar est omnium.* Tom Tulliver is a splendid copy of a boy, and I cannot help thinking that this author, who has painted men and women more faithfully than any other author of the present day, might be able to gain the same distinc-

tion in delineating boy life, if the author would but devote the author's self to this higher walk of literature. (Messieurs the critics, excuse this clumsy repetition of a word, but you must see the difficulty under which my possessive personal pronouns labour in this last sentence.) Oh that 'George Eliot' could be a schoolmaster! Yet, if report tells true, that is impossible.

Tom Tulliver's great excellence is, that he seems to be a faithful representation of boyhood in general, and, at the same time, to have an individual character of his own, which we recognise at once as being like, and yet different from, the boys that we have known. The description of his views of life is no less natural than clever:—

'At Mr. Jacob's academy, life had not presented itself to him as a very difficult problem: there were plenty of fellows to play with, and Tom being good at all active games—fighting especially—had that precedence among them which seemed to him inseparable from the personality of Tom Tulliver. Mr. Jacobs himself, familiarly known as Old Goggles, from his habit of wearing spectacles, imposed no painful awe; and if it was the property of snuffy old hypocrites like him to write like copperplate, to spell without forethought, and to spout "My name is Norval" without bungling, Tom, for his part, was rather glad he was not in danger of those mean accomplishments. . . . He thought that a clergyman would give him a great many Scripture lessons, and probably make him learn the Gospel and Epistle on a Sunday, as well as the Collect. But in the absence of specific information, it was impossible for him to imagine that school and a schoolmaster would be something entirely different from the academy of Mr. Jacobs. So, not to be at a deficiency, in case of his finding genial companions, he had taken care to carry with him a small box of percussion-caps; not that there was anything particular to be done with them, but they would

serve to impress strange boys with a sense of his familiarity with guns. . . . . He had not been there a fortnight before it was evident to him that life, complicated not only with Latin grammar, but with a new standard of English pronunciation, was a very difficult business, made all the more obscure by a thick mist of bashfulness. Tom, as you may have observed, was never an exception among boys for ease of address; but the difficulty of enunciating a syllable in reply to Mr. and Mrs. Stelling was so great, that he even dreaded to be asked at table whether he would have more pudding. As to the percussion-caps, he had almost resolved, in the bitterness of his heart, that he would throw them into a neighbouring pond; for not only was he the solitary pupil, but he began even to have a certain scepticism about guns, and a general sense that his theory of life was undermined. For Mr. Stelling thought nothing of guns, or horses either, apparently; and yet it was impossible for Tom to despise Mr. Stelling as he had despised old Goggles. . . . He was too clear-sighted not to be aware that Mr. Stelling's standard of things was quite different, was certainly something higher in the eyes of the world, than that of the people he had been living amongst, and that, brought in contact with it, he, Tom Tulliver, appeared uncouth and stupid. He was by no means indifferent to this, and his pride got into an uneasy condition which quite nullified his boyish self-satisfaction, and gave him something of a girl's susceptibility.'

There are few writers who could describe the operations of a boy's mind in this way. Would that 'George Eliot' had broken off the story called 'The Mill on the Floss,' beautiful though it is, in the first volume, sent the hero to a good school, after a little preparation by the Reverend Mr. Stelling, and earned the eternal gratitude of the world by the publication of 'Tom Tulliver's School Days.' To think of such talents being wasted on the desert air of circulating libraries!

These four writers, then, have in some measure

deserved well of boys, but they have been treated shamefully by most novelists. I name no names. I scorn to defend boys against their spite and ignorance. I pass them by with silent contempt. Let them wallow in their whiskered captains, their golden-haired villainesses, their pale and interesting curates. Boys are pearls not to be scattered promiscuously before—novel-reading young ladies.

Historians, being compelled to deal with truth, have, as a rule, done justice to boys. The same thing cannot be said of moralists and essayists, who often work in another material. I have already alluded to Dr. Johnson's opinion about boys, on which subject, at least, I should have been as bold as Sir Joshua Reynolds in 'throwing back the ball' to him. But Dr. Johnson was at least an open and honourable enemy; there are writers who have done their best to take away the character of boys in a sly and underhand manner. De Quincey is the most aggravating of these calumniators, aggravating by his contemptuous insinuations and his ignorant indifference. As a monkey of fourteen, he professes to have despised the character and pursuits of ordinary boys with a coolness which would make one angry if it were not so ridiculous. He praises his own school—no one is so depraved as not to have some affection for his *Alma Mater*,—and this was a boy who afterwards spoke tenderly of even his 'stony-hearted stepmother.'

At that school, he tells us, there were no playgrounds —at least there may have been one, he admits, for the lower school, but *he doesn't know*—no canings, none of the vulgar tricks and amusements of boys. No, his companions, he says, 'sought for the ordinary subjects of their conversational discourse in literature,' and discipline was maintained entirely through the influence of the precepts and example of the elder boys, himself included.

His own description of his school days does not go very far to recommend the discipline of this model school in my eyes. He arrived one Sunday evening; the elder boys received him courteously, and seeing him dejected, brought out some brandy, which speedily had the effect of curing his home-sickness. (Oh humdrum, orthodox schoolmasters, what do you think of those model boys whose 'self-restraint' and 'self-discipline' made punishment unnecessary, keeping brandy in a cupboard!) The duties of hospitality thus discharged, they proceeded to indulge in an argument about Grotius, which Master De Quincey represents himself as having relished extremely, and reports most faithfully from memory. Here is a sample of the way in which these wonderful boys discoursed—

'No, no,' impatiently interrupted G——. 'All such fantastic conflicts with self-created difficulties terminate in pure ostentation, and profit nobody. But the self-imposed limitations of Grotius had a special purpose, and realized a value not otherwise attainable.'

Not bad this, even for the biggest boys of a grammar school. The intellectual power of our generation must indeed be less than that of our fathers, as some people would have us believe, for I could never get my boys to talk like this, nor indeed could I do it myself in such an off-hand way. Malicious and incredulous people might say that the whole scene and story is an opium dream, for the only thing that looks real and natural in it is the suggestion made by one low-minded boy, that De Quincey had timed his arrival so late in the evening, in order to escape the usual Sunday exercise, which was the theme of this display of learning and eloquence.

De Quincey ought to have been at home in this abode of the Muses, where things were carried on in a way so congenial to his tastes, and where he was treated with so much indulgence. He had a private apartment for study and sleep, and, as he very condescendingly remarks, 'the room being airy and cheerful, I found nothing disagreeable in this double use of it.' (I hope the young gentlemen of Uppingham and suchlike schools are equally pleased with the arrangements made for their convenience.) But the absence of corporal punishment, the private room, and the literary society were all in vain—De Quincey got into a bad state of health, felt himself unable to take some nasty medicine prescribed for him by an ignorant doctor, borrowed ten guineas, ran away,

spoiled his constitution by starving in the streets of London, and finally took to eating opium, all which might have been prevented if his school and companions had not been quite such models. For if the government of the place had not been one of 'self-restraint' and 'self-discipline' he would have been made to take his medicine; and if he had been in the way of playing 'dab' or fives, his digestion would never have got out of order, and then he never would have run away, and would have had no excuse for taking opium—*q.e.d.*

Well, give me your ordinary boy of 'vulgar brawling tendencies,' who is not above having a playground at his school, and so can digest any amount of grammar and toffee, not to mention brandy; who takes his floggings and doses when they are prescribed for him as a matter of course; and who, if he resolves to run away at night, is pretty sure to think better of it in the morning; and I'll be happy to let any one who likes have your geniuses to look after.

I have gibbeted De Quincey because his tone of patronizing contempt towards boys is particularly objectionable, but he is by no means a solitary offender; and I have my eye upon one or two authors, living and dead, with whom I intend to remonstrate some day when I have space and leisure. Let the proud moralist and the hireling cynic beware,

and know that there hath arisen a champion for the innocent and oppressed!

The reason why so many authors have talked nonsense and sentiment and scandal about boys is to my eyes plain enough. They never were boys themselves; or, at least, their boyhood has not been such a success as their after career. Authorship is, I believe, the secretion of an unhealthy brain; and one can easily imagine the most edifying authors having been very unwholesome boys. There is Morgan, for instance, one of my boys, who is a dreadful sneak, and is always sulking about by himself in a corner of the playground, and does the other boys' exercises, at the rate of an apple or six chestnuts for ten sentences of Arnold, and gets kicked if they are wrong. That fellow is no fool; and when he grows old enough to read and partly understand spasmodic poetry, he will be quite capable of writing portentous works upon the Eternal Verities, the corruption of the age, and his own private virtues and misfortunes; but will he be likely to do justice to the memories of his old school-fellows? Scarcely. He will be more likely to gloat over their vulgarity and barbarity, and give you an appalling picture of the inhuman tyrant who made his school days a burden to him. I gave him a sound thrashing once for burning a hole in the sheets while reading in bed, and then telling me a lie about it, for which

I shall no doubt be held up to the execration of posterity.

I cannot say that poets, as a rule, are unkind to boys. Indeed, they generally fawn upon them with an adulation that is quite fulsome, though one can't help seeing that it is not natural boys whom they admire, but only boys painted in rose colour, with their best clothes and Sunday sentiments on. Occasionally, however, a poet proves an exception to the rule, and shows a little spite towards boys. For instance, what business had La Fontaine to write this :—

> 'Certain enfant qui sentait son collége,
> Doublement sot et doublement fripon
> Par le jeune âge et par le privilége
> Qu'ont les pédants de gâter la raison'?

This is very offensive, both to boys and their masters. It is easy to see that this poet must have had his wig laughed at, or his stockings splashed with mud, by some irreverent urchin.

There is one poet who has spoken up for boys with an amount of earnestness and good-sense that is quite refreshing to find in a layman. I mean Juvenal, who has written one satire—nay, one line—for the sake of which I forgive him all the misery he has caused me in my own juvenile person, all the troubles he has made me inflict upon others. That line deserves to be graven in letters of gold over every family hearth and every school porch :—

'MAXIMA DEBETUR PUERO REVERENTIA.'

I could spin out this chapter to any length. Indeed, by patience and study, one could fill volumes with remarks on the figure boys have made in books; but time presses. I am reminded that the limits of this work are almost exhausted.

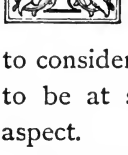
There is a certain boy, who has appeared in the pages and at the doors of authors perhaps more often than any other boy, but who is elsewhere happily unknown to the general public. Wishing well to the not inconsiderable majority of my fellow-creatures as yet guiltless of print, I hope they may long be free from the visitations of that boy. For, whether in actual living presence he kicks his heels, and with inky fingers twirls his cap in your hall, or only waits on you metaphorically and through the penny post, he is ofttimes a nuisance and a torment. At the present moment his presence is weighing heavy on my soul; so I am constrained reluctantly to put an end to this chapter, and consign it to his tender mercies. May he bear it safely and quickly, and not stop by the way to play at leap-frog or pitch-and-toss. He would surely comport himself with due dignity in public, if he but knew that he is mentioned by Horace, who apostrophizes him in the same terms as I myself am about to address to him—

'I, puer, atque meo citus hæc subscribe libello.'

CHAPTER XIII.

BOYS AT HOME.

'Home is the resort
Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty.'—THOMSON.



FEEL that I ought to say something in such a book as this about boys at home, but what to say I am at a loss, inasmuch as I have always been accustomed to consider it as the natural and normal state of boys to be at school, and to study them only in that aspect.

More than one of my boys has asked me to visit him at his home, but I have hitherto scrupled to do so, feeling as if I, the grim gaoler and executioner, would be a shadow on the happy hearth. I hope I have often made boys love me; yet I dare not intrude on the more sacred love of home. Besides, to be actually in a pure and happy home is too painful joy for me; it rouses up in my heart such a bitter longing for what once has been but never can be again. I

would not torment myself by envying my boys. It is their lot in life to be light-hearted and loving while they may; it is mine to work through cloud and sunshine in the hard yet happy service of God, that He may, in the fulness of time, through such weak words and works as mine, call all His wayward children home. In that blessed home we shall all meet at length, and know at length what is a Father's love and a brother's care, and see at length how sin and virtue, and joy and sorrow, and all things earthly, have worked together for our good.

But I like to think of my boys at home, of the warm firesides, of the kindly faces, of the tender words of love. In these dull, wintry holidays I have no greater pleasure than to fancy myself at a happy home amid familiar faces. I seem to see them piling up the snow-man, or chasing each other round the frosty meadow, or dancing about the Christmas-tree, and to hear their boisterous shouts and their joyous laughter, till I almost come to believe that I again am young and merry and careless, and loved and loving.

'A boy shows his best side at home,' says an author whom I have already more than once quoted, and indeed we schoolmasters, clever as we are, too often see only the worst side. If we only knew our pupils at home, and could see the softer and deeper shades of their character, what increased power should we

not have over them, what mistakes in our management of them could we not correct! There are few boys, however bad, to whose hearts there is not some key, and because we cannot find it, and their parents cannot, or will not, use it, too many are lost that might have been saved. Love, indeed, is the lamp of life, which alone can light up all its dark places, and there is love everywhere, if we were not blind to its calm, soft light.

I was one night travelling on the railway with a boy who is the greatest pickle in my class, noisy, idle, disobedient, caring little for punishment or reproof, and thus, in the eye of the dominie, almost a hopeless case. We were to pass within sight of his father's house, and I was struck by the eagerness with which he watched for half an hour, 'to see the light in my little brother's window.' This confirmed me in a previous opinion of mine, that boys are not, as some philosophers say, mere brawling, sensual, mischief-loving animals, but, like the rest of us, imperfect human spirits, with a world of tenderness and affection beneath their rough words and ways. And I afterwards found means of making that boy much more docile.

If the pleasures of a happy home are great, what must the pain of leaving it be? You remember it, reader, if you were ever sent to a far-off school, as I was. Perhaps, the first time, we did not much feel it,

all other thoughts being lost in the pleasing sensations of novelty and schoolboy dignity. Perhaps we wondered that the tears stood in our mother's eyes, and that our father's manly voice trembled as he said good-bye to us. But the second time, when you knew what school was and what home was, though your school might be a good one, and you liked your games and companions ever so much, did you return with as much unconcern? Did your spirits not sink within you as the day drew near? Do you not remember how the miserable morning came, and how the hours and minutes went by, and how your heavy heart came welling up into your throat, and how you strove in vain to fight with your tears? You may not have suffered so keenly, and your sorrow may have cleared away more quickly, but you surely have known some of the misery which I have felt, as my father's face was lost to my sight, and with the grasp of his hand still warm on mine, I leaned back in the carriage with a bursting heart, and found all the world dark and dreary and cold.

But if the parting be thus sad, how happy is the return! Oh the pleasure of expectation, and the impatient counting of the days, and the bliss of starting, and the wild excitement of drawing near the familiar scenes, and the warm welcome and the fatted calf! Did it not all use to look like an impossible dream?

With other feelings we may have returned home at an unusual time, and for a sad reason. Did you ever leave school with a heavy bitter pain in your heart, anxious yet fearing to arrive at the journey's end? Do you know what it is to catch the first sight of the house where the blinds are drawn down, and within which lies still and white a dreadful something that but a week before was your nearest and dearest on earth? And then to cross the well-known threshold, not with a bound as of old, but with a feeling of awe and strangeness, and to be convulsively clasped to the heaving bosom of the living, and led in tearful silence to the chamber of the dead? God in His goodness have mercy upon young hearts so sorely tried!

There are no joys so pure, and no sorrows so great, and yet so blessed, as those of a holy and loving home.

But though I am so enthusiastic about the blessings of a happy home, I have a due distrust and horror of home education. It has been so often my experience that papa won't take the trouble to manage his boys, and mamma can't; and so for want of a little wise and wholesome restraint they are to grow up insubordinate, conceited, and selfish,—to be a curse to themselves and to others, and a special eyesore to schoolmasters. Oh woman, woman! how much folly and sin art thou to blame for from the

beginning of the world! I may feel too strongly on this point. More than half the woes of my life have been caused by women, and this may have made me a confirmed misogynist; but is it not sad for a dominie to see mothers and sisters besetting a healthy boy with their inconceivable silliness, filling his honest, empty head with vanity, self-will, and other things, which shall end but in vexation of spirit? And are not fathers and brothers, too, often stupid and sensual; do they never ruin our work by their indifference and bad example; do they never try to teach ridicule and contempt of us to our pupils, for whom we are doing so much? Who can say me nay, or deny that it is the faults of parents rather than of their children that the conscientious schoolmaster has, in too many cases, to do battle with?

It is because I value the influences of home so much that I wish they were always better directed. Is it madness, or what, that makes some of our most excellent parents do their best to ruin the characters of their darlings? I conceive of no other reason. Their theories of education may be most admirable, but their practice makes me often think it charity to consider them as insane.

The other day I was walking through the streets of London, and watching with no little interest the poor boys home for the holidays, who were swarming in all the streets of the West End. Grammarless,

cricketless, objectless, pale from the ravages of plum-pudding, with high hats on their heads, and their hands in their pockets, they lounged vacantly about the shop-windows, or trotted patiently by the sides of their female relatives. Not one of their faces did I know, but my heart yearned for them, and I felt that I had a mission to them. Yet, how to accomplish it? Was I to seize hold of one in the street, and commence operations by demanding from him the ablative singular of *animal*. This would scarcely do. I was bound in chains of silence; but the fulness of my heart would not let me rest, so I made haste to relieve my feelings by drawing up a plain and practical set of rules for the home education of boys, which I should like to be put into the hands of every duly qualified parent of respectability in the country, and to be diligently acted upon by him or her, as the case may be. Thus I trust much wrong-doing, folly, and suffering, will be spared to boys of the present and of all future generations. My rules are as follows:—

To train a boy in the way he should go, from his infancy you must accustom your boy to be obedient, attentive, and respectful to all who are older and wiser than himself. You must teach him by precept and example to be simple in his desires, pure in his thoughts, modest in his words, brave and sincere in his actions. You must show him that what is best

worth living for in the world is not to wear fine clothes, or to eat nice things, but to be and to do good. You must tell him that it is the duty of every man to serve God in spirit and in truth, and that so to serve Him is to be humble and truthful and thankful and loving. You should not teach him many things in the way of knowledge, but much. You should try to make his learning pleasant to him, but if it be unpleasant, you must not on that account excuse him from it. You must keep him as far as possible from the company and example of evil-doers; but you should encourage him to seek the healthy companionship of honest and happy boys of his own age. You must never allow him to be vain or petulant, and never yield to his self-will. You must take care to be both firm and kind, to praise and to punish him when necessary, with justice and discretion, not from caprice or temper—for if you cannot rule yourself, how can you expect to rule your boy? Having seen to all this, you may consider that you have done your part, and you must then look out a fitting school for him, having regard to his talents and disposition, and place him there under the care of a gentleman, who, you can trust, will honestly and diligently use his professional skill to make your son as good a man, in every respect, as is possible under the circumstances.

All will agree to the wisdom of these precepts,

which indeed may be mainly found in Locke's essay on Education, and several other works written long before I undertook to enlighten mankind on the subject—but how many will practise them? So, in order that people may at least have a chance of being honest and consistent, with sadness of heart I venture to present the public with a very different set of rules, which my experience forces me to believe will be more readily carried out. They are these—

You will love your child blindly, not only his supposed excellences, but his evident faults. You will encourage him from his cradle to be selfish and proud and obstinate. You will take delight in his 'pretty perverseness,' and be careful not to check his wayward humours, except when these interfere with your own pleasure or comfort. You will accustom him to be greedy and lazy and vain, like yourself. You will teach him that it is the proper thing to serve Mrs. Grundy, and call it worshipping God. You will make him learn just as much or as little as he pleases, and, indeed, you will look upon it as an insufferable hardship that he should be compelled to do anything that is disagreeable to him. You will instruct him that it is not advisable to be vulgarly inquisitive into the morals of our associates, but that we must be becomingly strict about their wealth and gentility. You will never punish or restrain him, except when you are in a bad temper, and you will

be very angry if any one interferes with you in allowing him to have nothing but his own way.

You will then find it necessary to send him to school, as it will be part of your creed and catechism that money and its attendant advantages are the great object in life, and as, unluckily, money is hard to get now-a-days without learning. Perhaps there is a good school near you where he might have as sound instruction and as much care as anywhere else. But you will on no account send him to it, lest he should there meet with the baker's and the grocer's wretched little brats, and learn from them to eat with his knife and to speak with a provincial accent. But you will send him off to some great school where you can have the satisfaction of paying much for his learning very little. There he shall have the advantage of meeting with the sons of the wealthy and the great, and can learn from them that it is a fine thing to be extravagant and impudent and idle, but that only a mean and spiritless fellow is simple and innocent and lowly-minded. Or if you do send him to some inferior school close at hand, you will encourage him to be rebellious and impertinent, and to bring home frivolous complaints of his schoolmaster, and, perhaps, for his sweet sake, you will do your best to insult and persecute a scholar and a gentleman who has thought it his duty to be severe towards your darling. Or you will not send him to school at all,

but to 'classes,' where he will learn to think himself a man ere he has a right to call himself a decent boy, to smoke, to swear, and to play the puppy. So far good.

You will now begin to have a greater pride in him than ever, if he wears well-fitting coats, and carries his cane with an air, and strokes his incipient moustache in a way that shows complete self-satisfaction and assurance. You will, perhaps, send him to the University, where he will waste your money and his own time in learning to be riotous and luxurious and proud-minded. He will then be a perfect gentleman, I grant you, but what besides? His education is finished; shall I tell you the fruits of it, or have you already reaped them?

I fear I have got a long way from the subject of boys at home, but pardon me, reader! Did you ever have a son who has shattered his own health and broken your heart by his follies and vices, who has cast aside nearly every shred of rectitude and restraint, who has drunk to the full of the poisoned cup that the devil holds to our lips, and crying in vain for yet another deadly and burning draught, has reeled and staggered and fallen in the prime and strength of his manhood? Is there no agonized voice calling to you from the shades of death and sin; is there no lost soul haunting your careworn pillow? If not, thank Heaven, and be wise in time.

All this may not come to pass, but call me not a vain alarmist. You can bring up your children to serve self, and they *may* escape any visible misfortune, and become rich and genteel, and die in the odour of respectability. But nought on earth can be more deadly and bitter than the fruits which may come of the system of education which I have just described; and such an education—God help them!—is being received by boys in thousands of the homes of England.

CHAPTER XIV.

RAGGED BOYS.

'Looking within myself, I note how thin
A plank of station, chance, or prosperous fate,
Doth fence me from the clutching waves of sin;—
In my own heart I find the worst man's mate,
And see not dimly the smooth-hinged gate
That opes to those abysses
Where ye grope darkly—ye who never knew
On your young hearts love's consecrating dew,
Or felt a mother's kisses,
Or home's restraining tendrils round you curled;
Ah, side by side with heart's-ease in this world
The fatal nightshade grows and bitter rue.'

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

LATELY paid a visit to a school in London, where one might learn more in half-an-hour than is taught in most of our Universities in a week. It is not the sort of school that you and I are acquainted with, reader. It is not an old foundation, more's the pity. The course of education is not classical, nor commercial, nor scientific; nothing but the barest necessaries of intellectual life are supplied at it. Though it is

crowded with pupils, it is not a profitable institution; indeed, its conductors have hard enough work to pay its expenses. And yet I would rather see any school in the kingdom shut up than this one.

I should like to describe this school for you, but it would be better that you should go and see it for yourself. Go and see the barred doors, the dingy, close rooms, the coarse beds, and the scanty fare of the pupils. Go and look round on the crowd of joyless faces, mark the deformed and diseased bodies and minds, view the havoc that the twin sisters Sin and Misery can make with the image of God. And if you have the heart of a man beneath the coat of a gentleman, you will feel the bitter shame which I felt, that this should be while I could lift a finger to prevent it.

This book has not been written about such boys as these. I have been speaking only of the boys who have good clothes and nourishing food and kind friends, who go to church regularly, and attend respectable schools, and are not taken to the police-court when they steal anything. I have not spoken of the others, not from scorn or indifference, but from sheer pity and sickness of heart. I have tried to gain your ear by dressing truth in a laughing guise; but I dare not laugh in the presence of sin and sorrow.

You know very well, reader, the class of society to

which I allude, and you know that we are quite different beings from these low people. Still, will you hear one word about them from me? I have a peculiar right to your attention. For I am not one of those Bohemian authors who live in garrets and write for the Radical newspapers, and are always bothering us about our duties towards the poor. I am a most respectable character, in spite of all insinuations to the contrary. I am never in debt; I am utterly unacquainted with the law of civil process. I don't booze in taverns at night, nor seek matutinal inspiration from gin and water. I never wandered up and down Oxford Street, consorting with Anns and other disreputable individuals. I am not familiar with the green-rooms of theatres, and have rather a horror of ballet-dancers and billiard-markers. In short, I am a steady and sober citizen, paying rates and taxes regularly, and in every way worthy of credit. But sometimes when I think of the sufferings of a large part of mankind, a bitter, self-contemptuous wrath wells up in my heart, and I almost long to fling my respectability to the winds, and to become ragged and vulgar and destitute, so that at least I could look every fellow-creature in the face without feeling myself a traitor to the cause of humanity.

Do you ever try, genteel reader, to realize to yourself the lot in life of these ragged boys? You cannot imagine it fully, but do you ever *try?* God, who made them, only knows aright what are their chances

of success in this world. Ignorance, drunkenness, want, and scorn, are arrayed against them, and how few human hands stretched out to help them, how few wise and kindly voices raised to cheer! Such hands and such voices are at work, busier and louder, thank Heaven! every day, but are they ours? Or do we sit in our comfortable mansions and rectories and manor-houses and furnished lodgings, and eat and drink the fat of the land with self-satisfied content, and discourse over our walnuts and wine of the sorrows of the poor, and agree that it is all very sad, and rejoice that this is such a philanthropic age? And sometimes, if Jane doesn't want a new dress, or if Bobby's college expenses have fallen ten pounds short of what we expected, do we send a little subscription to such schools as I have mentioned, and thank God that we are not as other men, hard-hearted and uncharitable, or even as those publicans, Messrs. Brown, Smith, and Jones, who only subscribe one guinea to the County Hospital, while we are so generous as to give two? Have we given one, or perhaps two crumbs from our table to starving Lazarus at our gate? Have we taken care that he has our cast-off purple and fine linen? Have we poured one drop of oil into the wounds of our wretched neighbour, nay more, have we even taken the trouble to cross the road and borne for one moment to look at his sores and his nakedness? It is well; we have shown that we fear God and are not

without heart. Let us eat and drink and go to church, and we are ready whenever our souls may be required of us.

Allow me to suggest a plan by which we might practise a little extra Christianity without much inconvenience to ourselves; nay, I venture to say, with considerable pleasure and profit. The Bible, of course, commands us to exercise the virtue of hospitality by giving stupid and expensive banquets to people of wealth and position, who can bid us again and make us a recompense. But as we do not always find the precepts of the Bible stand in our way, let us ignore them in this. Let us burn the invitations which we have just issued for a large dinner-party, and countermand the turtle and champagne. Let us ask our friends, if we will, to a plain and hearty meal, and try to enjoy ourselves for once without starch in our manners and neckties. By taking my advice you may lose your reputation for wealth and gentility, but you may chance to win a fellow-creature from death and sin. For I would have you count the money which you will thus save, and send it to some such institution as the Refuge for Homeless and Destitute Boys, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

May that school go on and prosper, say I, and yet may it, in time, become unsupported and unfrequented! For if I, and those who think like me, had our way, we would strive so to educate our boys that,

in after years, when our works and words are forgotten, there should be no ragged boys, no helpless poverty, and no contented pride in our land. Utopian, chimerical, visionary! you will say with scorn, pouring out upon me all the epithets with which you fortify yourselves in your pleasant indifference. Must there not ever be sorrow among imperfect men? Sorrow—yes; such soul-destroying sorrow—no! by our hope and faith in the future—no! Has God bid us leave the world as He has seen fit in His wisdom to make it, or has He not given us a task to do on it, from our share in which we shrink at our peril! Has the task not been begun? And is it all to be in vain? Is the sneer against Utopianism to put an end to the march of centuries? No, if He who is with His people be indeed stronger than he that is against them.

But if we believe not that we shall have to answer to God for our stewardship of His riches, can we not discern the signs of the times? If this ragged mob increase and multiply on our hands, will it be content to remain always ragged and starving? May it not some day rise up in the cursed strength of ignorance and pull down our comfortable mansions about our ears, with flame and tumult, scattering our rotten respectabilities to the winds of anarchy? Not likely, while we have policemen and hangmen, and soldiers and breech-loading rifles to maintain law and order. And have we not love and wisdom,

which are both cheaper and stronger than rifles? Can we make no use of them, or will they cost more than prisons and gallows?

I set out gaily; I end this book gravely and bitterly. No one can look well into any part of this life of ours without stumbling on the hard fact that it is not what we would have it to be. But no one can read rightly the revelation which God has given us through the mouths of His prophets and teachers, through the records of history, through the victories of science, without learning that hope is ours, hope of the brighter day that will come on earth, the day when utter ignorance and want shall be relics of the past, when we shall spend on schools the money that we now spend on prisons, when all of us, rich and poor, shall be more kindly and frank, professing no religion which we do not practise, giving reverence only to what we can truly revere,—in short, more like our boys, with their simpleness strengthened by our manliness, and our wisdom purified by their honesty. For this some of us are working; most of us are at least weekly or daily praying, or pretending to pray, 'Thy kingdom come.'

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